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ABSTRACT

This study presents the second of four reports of the results of the 1970-71 National Assessment of Literature. The educational attainments of nine-year-olds, thirteen-year-olds, seventeen-year-olds, and adults (ages 26-35) were surveyed according to the subjects' ability to become engaged in, find meanings in, and evaluate a work of literature. Respondents made verbal remarks about poems and stories; these remarks were taperecorded and classified according to four categories developed by Alan Purves and Victoria Rippere: engagement-involvement, perception, interpretation, and evaluation. The respondents also wrote essays about stories or poems; these essays were classified as inadequate, barely adequate, adequate, or superior. The bulk of this report consists of sample responses to the exercises; judgments about the worth and implications of the responses are left to the reader. (Some charts have poor reproducibility due to type size; pages 179-231 containing statistical data of results are omitted because of nonreproducibility due to type size.) (DI)

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# LITERATURE

## REPORT 02-L-02

# RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

1970-71 Assessment

CS 200 542

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS
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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

A Project of the Education Commission of the States

Winfield Dunn, Governor of Tennessee, Chairman, Education Commission of the States
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Assessment Reports

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

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# REPORT 02-L-02

# RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

## Theme 2, Literature

April, 1973

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# FOREWORD

Each year, beginning with its second assessment year, the National Assessment of Educational Progress publishes a General Information Yearbook which describes all major aspects of the Assessment's operation. The reader who desires more detailed information about how National Assessment defines its groups, prepares and scores its exercises, designs its sample and analyzes and reports its results, should consult the General Information Yearbook for Year 02, Reading and Literature (02-GIY).

Briefly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress is an information gathering project which surveys the educational attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and adults (ages 26-35) in ten subject areas: Art, Career and Occupational Development, Citizenship, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Writing. Two areas are assessed every year and all areas are periodically reassessed in order to measure educational progress. Each assessment is the product of several years' work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the country. Initially, these people design objectives for each area, proposing specific goals which they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. These goals are reviewed by more people and then passed along to developers of tests, whose task it is to create measurement tools appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises prepared by the test developers have passed extensive reviews by specialists in the subject matter and in measurement, they are administered to probability samples of various populations. The people who comprise those samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can generalize about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data has been collected and analyzed, National Assessment publishes reports such as this one to present the results as accurately as possible. So that there may be no misunderstanding of the results published in this volume, we urge the reader to consider the following discussions of the reporting format and the limitations of the data.

## How National Assessment Results Are Presented

Each theme provides several kinds of information about the results for each exercise.

First, there are national results for all foils or all scoring categories. Printed along with each exercise are the national percentages of people who selected each choice or were placed in each scoring category. These figures should add up to 100%, but sometimes they do not because they have been rounded off to the nearest tenth.

Then there are group results (graphic and tabular) for correct choices and appropriate scoring categories. National Assessment divides the national population into various groups or categories of people in order to provide data about certain types of schools and students. The variables are region of the country, sex, color, parental education, and size and type of community. Within each variable there are at least two groups. Each of the variables and groups is fully defined in the General Information Yearbook, but the following explanations may serve the reader's purposes:

Region. The country has been divided into four regions--Southeast, West, Central, and Northeast--in order to present results for various regions relative to the national results.

Sex. For every exercise we present the results obtained by males and by females.

Color. Currently, we present results for Blacks and Whites.

Parental Education. The four parental education categories are defined by the highest level of education attained by either of a person's parents. The no-high-school category is comprised of all people who indicated that neither parent went to high school. The some-high-school category consists of all those who indicated that the parent with the most education attended high school but did not graduate. In the graduated-from-high-school category are all those who indicated that at least one parent graduated from high school, and in the post-high-school group are all who indicated that at least one parent received some post high school education. (This may mean college, but it also includes adult education courses of any kind, vocational training, etc.)

Size and Type of Community (STOC). The categories or groups within this variable are defined by the size of a person's community and an occupational profile of the area his school serves. Again, the reader should consult the General Information Yearbook for precise definitions of these groups.

1. Extreme Inner City. People in this category attend schools in cities with populations greater than 150,000; the schools serve areas in which a high proportion of the residents are on welfare or not regularly employed.

2. Extreme Rural. People in this category attend schools in a community having a population less than 3,500. Most residents in the area the school serves are farmers or farm workers.

3. Extreme Affluent Suburb. Individuals in this group attend schools within the city limits or residential area served by a city with a population greater than 150,000; the area served by the school consists primarily of professional or managerial personnel.

4. Rest of Big City. These are students attending schools in a big city (population greater than 200,000) who are not included in either the Extreme Inner City or Extreme Affluent Suburb groups.

5. Medium Size City. Individuals in this category attend schools in cities with populations between 25,000 and 200,000.

6. Small City. People in this group attend schools in a community of less than 25,000 inhabitants.

7. Suburban Fringe. People in this group attend schools in the metropolitan area served by a city with more than 200,000 inhabitants; the school and the area it serves are outside of the city limits.

Size of Community Groups. The results for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds who are in school can be presented in terms of these STOC categories. However, we do not have the information necessary to present the results for adults and out-of-school 17-year-olds in the same way. Consequently, the following less specific breakdown of results appears for all 17-year-olds (in-and out-of-school) and young adults:

1. Big City. In this group are all adults and out-of-school 17-year-olds who live in cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants; also included are 17-year-olds who attend schools in the same sized cities.

2. Urban Fringe. This category consists of adults and out-of-school 17-year-olds who live in the metropolitan area served by a big city, but outside of the city limits. It also includes 17-year-olds attending school, in such areas.

3. Medium Size City. This category is comprised of adults and out-of-school 17-year-olds who live in communities with populations between 25,000 and 200,000; it also includes 17-year-olds attending schools in such communities.

4. Small Places. Adults and 17-year-olds who live or attend school in communities with populations under 25,000 fall into this group.

## Group Effects or Differences from the National Percentage

The graphs of group performance present, along with the percentage of success for each group, a percentage which indicates how that group's performance differs from the national performance. If the percentage is lower than the national percentage, the difference is expressed as a negative number; otherwise, it is a positive number. These "effects," or differences from the national percentage, always appear in the column at the left margin of every graph.

## Significant Differences

The object of a national assessment is to determine what an entire population (all 9-year-olds, say, or all Blacks) have achieved. Since we cannot assess everyone, we have to draw samples of people and infer from their achievements what everyone would achieve. All of our results, then, are estimates; but we are confident that they accurately reflect performances of entire populations plus or minus some small error.

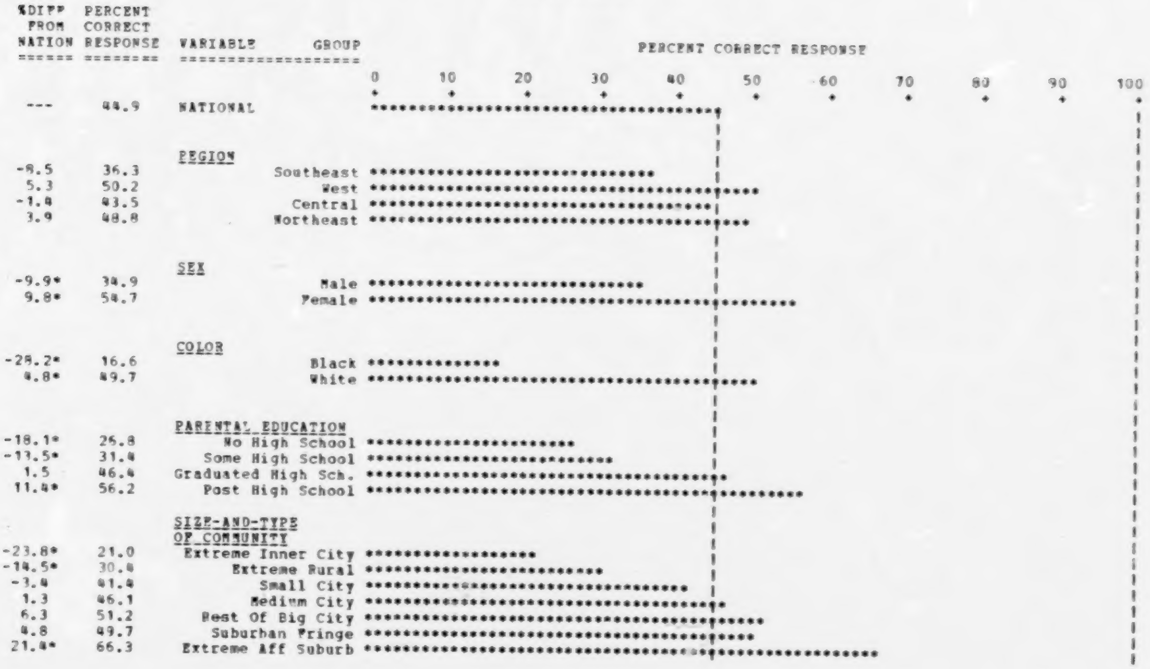
In our discussion of differences between group percentages and national percentage, we want to call attention to those effects which are almost certain to exist in the population and are not products of random sampling error. National Assessment computes these significant differences by using a measure of the variability in responses called a standard error. Since we want to be confident that a difference in percentages can be relied upon to appear in an entire population, we have adopted a statistical convention whereby, for each exercise, every group percentage which is more than 2 standard errors above or below the national percent will be viewed as a significant difference. Differences that large would occur only rarely by chance (i.e., less than 5% of the time) if no real difference existed; differences of 2 standard errors or larger would probably indicate that the group and national percentages are really different. These significant differences are the starred figures in the column of differences on the left margin of each graph. They are usually the only effects discussed in the text and are referred to as "significant," "noteworthy," "notable," "reliable," and so on. Though the graphs represent many apparent differences from the national figure, we are not prepared to state that the unstarred results are anything other than random departures from the national figure; however, we are quite sure that the starred figures are not random departures.

Graph A shows what percentage of 9-year-olds selected the correct answer to an exercise both in the country as a whole and in various groups. The figures in the second column are percentages of success. The top line shows that about 45% of all the youngsters answered correctly; at the end of the line of stars which represents this figure there is a vertical dashed line running to the bottom of the graph. The displacement between the end of a starred line and the dashed line depicts the difference between a group result and the national figure. The precise numerical differences appear in the left-hand column of figures; ten of them are starred--i.e., significant--and these ten would be discussed in the ensuing text.

The results depicted by Graph A are representative of results found most often in this theme: that is, the starred lines usually get longer as one looks from the top of a set of variables to the bottom. Put another way, the Southeast line is usually shorter than the Central or Northeast line, the male line shorter than the female, the Black shorter than the White, the no high school shorter than the post high school, and the inner city line is shorter than the affluent suburb line.

The text for each exercise serves to highlight the notable features of the results. It is not in any way definitive. Rather, it is intended to present all pertinent data about the exercise and the information it yielded in order that each reader may judge for himself the usefulness of this material and its implications for the teaching of literature to different sorts of people.

## Graph A



## Limitations of the Data

Within the limitations due to measurement[1] and sampling error,[2] the obtained data as presented in National Assessment reports accurately describe the educational achievements of certain groups as they actually exist in the real world.

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[1] Measurement error stems from three sources: (1) the measuring instrument--in our case, the exercises--may have imperfections such as ambiguity or a built-in tipoff to the correct response; (2) the respondent's physical condition (permanent or temporary), emotional or attitudinal condition (again permanent or temporary), and motivation; and (3) the measurement situation--temperature, lighting, pleasantness of surroundings, noise level and the test administrator. The first two errors tend to be constant from group to group and do not affect comparisons.

[2] See Chapter 10 and Appendix C, General Information Yearbook (02-GIY) for a discussion of sampling error.

When the data show that a group has achieved either above or below the nation as a whole, one must exercise great caution in speculating about the causes of these obtained differences. Many factors may affect an individual's ability to give acceptable responses to exercises in the assessed subject areas. Consider, for example, a hypothetical group whose achievement is well above the national average. Most members of the group may attend schools which have excellent physical facilities and high quality faculties, belong to families which have attained a high socioeconomic level, have well-educated parents, come from homes with many reading materials and so on. All these factors could contribute to the group's high level of achievement, while membership in the group itself may contribute very little or nothing.

The name of a group is merely a categorical label. When we look at the data for a given group, therefore, we cannot say that any difference in achievement between that group and the nation as a whole is attributable solely to membership in that group. In other words, a group must not be construed as necessarily being the cause or even being a cause for the comparatively high or low achievement of that group as compared to the nation as a whole. Often, a disproportionately large percentage of the members of a group of interest are also members of particular groups defined by other factors. All these factors may contribute to the group's high (or low) level of achievement.

# INTRODUCTION

This is the second of four theme reports on the first National Assessment of Literature, administered in 1971. The exercises considered in this volume were designed to measure achievement of the second major Literature objective, "Become engaged in, find meanings in, and evaluate a work of literature."

The first of these three requirements presumes that engagement is a precondition for any meaningful transactions between writer and reader. The second--"find meanings in a work of literature"--requires simply that one learn to delimit the range of probable meanings implicit in the language and structure of a work, starting with the meanings of words and extending through the meanings (moral, aesthetic, whatever) of the actions created by words. Though the search for meanings can be overstressed at the expense of a total response to a work, it is nonetheless an inescapable operation and essential for understanding a work fully. Evaluation of a work of literature requires more than a simple "I like it" or "It's no good;" it demands reflection, understanding, and the application of relevant criteria.

Though engagement, the search for meanings, and evaluation can all take place without written or verbal responses, there are good reasons to require students to demonstrate overtly that they are taking place. First of all, essays are useful indicators to teachers who want to know how discriminating a response is, what lies behind negative or positive judgments, and how well one has understood the message an author has tried to convey. Only if they know these things can teachers serve as the guides they should be: guides not to "taste," but to sharpened sensibilities and greater sensitivity to the nuances of language, greater understanding of the work and of the response itself. Ultimately, overt responses are probably more important to the student than to the teacher; for it is only by attemtping to articulate a response and communicate it to others that one discovers exactly what one's response is and what its implications are. In defending or attacking values expressed in a work it is possible to learn more about the work and more about oneself; many interactions of this sort may well change one's view of experience altogether.

What constitutes a proper response to literature? The English educators who drafted the objectives listed three reasons why no *a priori* generalizations about responses would suffice:

(1) Literature, more than most of the arts, demands equal attention to content and form, to subject matter and artist. In certain works-*Areopagitica*, Emerson's *Essays*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *1984*, for example-the author seeks not approbation for his technique, but conviction that his point is valid. Other works demand of the reader intellectual pleasure in their artistry and awe of the artist; *The Importance of Being Earnest* or a Shakespearean sonnet is a work of this sort. Thus, when one poses as a goal, undeniably an important one, "Become engaged in...a work of literatire," one cannot say in what sort of engagement or with what aspect of the work that engagement should take place.

(2) Men grow more mature, and more aware of the complexities of life. Since literature is a heterocosm (a distillation or a criticism of life), the appreciation, even the perception of a literary work, changes within the individual as he matures. And since man's maturation depends on more than intelligence, schooling, or even age, one cannot reliably predict what work will engage him at what age in what way, or what work he will perceive at what age in what way.

(3) Even were literature and man completely predictable, the state of literary criticism precludes any but the most general *a priori* statements about critical goals. Some argue that emotional response is unimportant, some that it is the purpose of literature. Some argue that a work should be seen as a cultural or thematic document, some that it would be seen only as an artifact. Critics argue over the moral function of literature, over the best criteria for judging a literary work, over whether a work should be viewed in a literary context, a cultural context, or in isolation. The argument for each of these points of view is cogent, and while the best critics, in fact, view a work from many points, the average reader or student is likely to become bound in and to only one.

Accordingly, the literature exercise writers decided that scoring would involve placing each essay (or verbal remark) in one of five "neutral" categories, no one of which is intrinsically more desirable than any other, and then rating the response on a scale of one to four. The classification categories are detailed by Alan Purves and Victoria Rippere in NCTE Research Report No. 9, Elements of Writing about a Literary Work: A Study of Response to Literature.

Briefly, the Purves-Rippere categories describe various relationships between the writer of an essay and the work he is writing about. The first category, termed "engagement-involvement," defines personal approaches to the work--subjective reflections or digressions and general discussions of the respondent's involvement in it.

The second category is termed perception and it encompasses responses which separate respondent from work and attend to the work primarily as an object to be described or functionally analyzed. Essays or verbal comments in this category are usually formalistic or analytic in direction.

Interpretation is the third category and into it fall all responses in which the essay writer attempts to find meanings in the work and generalize about its content and implications.

The fourth major category is called evaluation; it encompasses quality judgments and general reflections on the worth of the work and the value of reading it. When we found that a great many people tended to retell the story or poem literally, we made a separate (fifth) category for retelling; in the Purves-Rippere scheme, this type of essay would be in Category II, but it seemed useful to separate formalistic responses from these quite different sorts of perception. We also added a sixth category for maverick responses, many of which were very creative, and a seventh category for essays about which three scorers could not agree.

Verbal responses were obtained by presenting people with stories or poems and asking them what they most wanted to say about the work, what they especially noticed, and what they thought about it. We recorded their responses, transcribed them, and categorized each statement made during the interview. Since most people expressed different reactions to each question, most produced statements in more than one category.

Results for essays, however, are a different matter. The scorers categorized an essay according to its general thrust; they did not, as with the verbal responses, classify individual statements. Thus, the category results for essay responses represent percentages of entire essays in a particular category. The two readers of each essay had to decide which of the frames of mind represented by the categories dominated the essay. This turned out to be easier than it sounds, probably because the essays were quite short and written within definite time limits.

The four-point quality scoring system worked as follows: a "one" response was totally inadequate; a "two" was barely adequate, usually consisting of perfunctory, undocumented, usually vague, assertions; a "three" was an adequate response using details in the work accurately to support an assertion about it; and a "four" was a superior response, demonstrating insight, command of details, and sophistication.

Scorers used the Scoring Guides which appear at the beginning of each chapter. Each response was read and classified by two different readers. When they were particularly difficult to categorize, readers indicated a second category choice alongside their first. Clerks compared the category choices of the two readers, and sent all responses upon which the readers could not agree (even with second choices) to a third reader for resolution.

Purves' system of classification is viable for most responses, but it is not without its problems. The following considerations should be taken into account by all who are interested in the results of these exercises:

1. No system can account for all possible responses without distortion. Language is by nature highly complex and often ambiguous, even under the best of circumstances. The ambiguities are multiplied when the language is being used awkwardly and under pressure, so that even the best of readers can be baffled by the manner in which many students express themselves. Apparently simple phrases (e.g., "pretty good") can strike different readers in different ways, since they are vague to begin with and often appear in unclear contexts. The question of what a given statement "means" is not (as the history of modern philosophy suggests) an easy question to answer.

2. Purves' major categories are defined by states of mind. He writes that it is necessary to consider "not a theory of literature, not the literary work, but the person who was reading the work" (the student). His elements "describe process more than they do content." Because this is true, the scorer is often required to discover the intentions of the students writing the essays. This is risky, to say the least, and given students who do not express themselves very well, it is sometimes impossible.

3. In order to account for everything in a given essay, Purves recommends dividing the essay into "statements," assigning category elements to every statement, and totalling up the elements at the end. A given essay would then be said to consist of (say) 30% Category I, 60% II, and 10% V. Though scorers did this for tape recorded responses, they did not do this for the essays, not only because it is too time-consuming,

but because such a system ignores the influence of context upon every statement's meaning. Instead, they tried to determine the predominant category for every essay. In most cases, it was not difficult to get agreement, especially when second choices were considered; and in those cases which required a third reader, the 'minority opinion' was always scored in the third column of ovals. Nevertheless, since the scoring involved choosing a dominant category, many essays contain elements of categories that are not reflected in the scoring. Whenever it was thought that the choice of one category over another of apparently equal weight would seriously distort the contents of an essay, scorers placed the essay in Category VII.

4. The categories are not always easily distinguishable. There can be such a fine line between two alternative possibilities that two readers, regardless of training, are sometimes unable to agree in their choices. At what point does a good paraphrase become an interpretation? How can one distinguish between a bad retelling and an inadequate interpretation (perhaps the student thinks he is retelling the story, but he has a faulty memory)? Often, a very personal engaged response is also evaluative: which category should take precedence? Are some creative responses attempts to paraphrase or retell the story, and not "creative" after all? Such are the questions a scorer has to ask when faced with frustratingly elusive responses, and they are difficult to answer to everyone's satisfaction. Nonetheless, scorers agreed 95% of the time, indicating that the categories were sufficiently discriminating to cover most cases.

The bulk of this theme report consists of sample responses to the exercises. Though it is tempting to comment upon many of these, we have refrained from doing so in the hope that each reader will form his or her own judgments about the worth and implications of the responses.

# PART I

## VERBAL AND TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES

The stimuli for the verbal and tape recorded responses consisted of three poems and the story "Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine," by Evaline Ness. Nine-year-olds reacted to the story and two poems, 13-year-olds were given two poems, and the two older age groups responded verbally to a single poem. All tape recorded or verbal response items are being released at this time; none have been held back for the next assessment. The following scoring guide was used to categorize and rate each statement made in response to the works.

### SCORING GUIDE

I. Engagement-involvement: What effect does the work have on me as an individual?
Does the student find the work believable, are the characters good or bad, do they remind him of people he knows or the situations he has observed in life? Does he question the actions of characters as if they were real, insist that they should do this or that? Does the student like the work? What sort of mood did it put him into? Is the response predominantly personal and subjective? The student might talk of his prejudices, his emotions, his thoughts, whatever.

Scoring: Inadequate--hardly articulated response ("I don't like it").
Barely adequate--describes the effect the work had on him without searching for the cause; or a vague description of student's mood upon finishing the work.
Adequate--statement of the effect the work had on student and a statement of the cause; vivid description of student's mood upon finishing the work; lively personal discussion.
Superior--effect the work had on student, clear statement of the cause; interesting and relevant personal discussion of the work or aspects of the work.

II. Perception: What is the nature of the work?

Description of the language, style or form of the work, a discussion of literary devices (metaphor, personification, etc.) in it, of its point of view or structure. Or a treatment of the work as a part of literary history; other academic discussions.

Scoring: Inadequate--factually incorrect, radically incomplete.
Barely adequate--a few, undeveloped formal statements.
Adequate--developed formal statements, not related to one another or related vaguely.
Superior--formal statements which rise above a mere catalogue of parts, describe several of the work's facets accurately, are perhaps organized to account for an over-riding hypothesis about the work.

III. Interpretation: What does the work mean?

What do the character's actions mean in relation to a universe of values outside of the work? What is the author's intention in writing the work? What is the moral? Any general response the intention of which seems clearly to be interpretive.

Scoring: Inadequate--student attempts to, but cannot, formulate an interpretation: "I don't understand."
Barely adequate--unverifiable or unverified hypothesis about the meaning of the work.
Adequate--student presents a hypothesis that accounts for the text and is somewhat verifiable.
Superior--a fully stated and supported hypothesis that accounts for most of the details in the text.

IV. Evaluation: Is the work a good work of art?

Is the work well written? Was it effective in amusing or moving the reader? Was it sincere or imaginative? Did it deal with a serious matter? Is it worth reading?

Scoring: Inadequate--student says only that the work is good or bad.
Barely adequate--a weak statement of the criterion for the judgment and a weak statement of the measure of the work against the criterion.

Adequate--a clear formulation of criteria and an adequate measure of the work against them; appropriate criteria, relevant to the work.
Superior--statement which formulates the criteria of judgment well and measures the work against them with supporting details.

V. Retelling and paraphrase

Scoring: Ages 9 and 13

Inadequate: Factually incorrect, radically incomplete
Adequate: Accurate retelling of work, relatively complete

Table 1 displays the distribution of responses in each category for all the exercises. As one might expect, there were definite changes in the distribution of statements among the categories depending on the stimulus and the age of the respondent. Very few 9-year-olds approached "Sam, Bangs and Moonshine" as an object to be analyzed, but a large percentage of them made engagement-involvement and evaluative statements about it. A great many more made formalistic perception responses when confronted with a poem, however. At all ages, about half or more of the people expressed some involvement with the poem, but never was the percentage of perception statements more than 30%. The proportion of interpretive statements increased with age. On one poem, only one 9-year-old response in ten was interpretive, but almost two-thirds of the statements made by 17-year-olds and adults fell into this category. Evaluative responses, on the other hand, decreased in number at the higher age levels. More than three 9-year-olds in five made evaluative statements, but at age 17 and the adult level the proportion was between a third and a half. This is perhaps partly due to the tendency of the 9-year-olds to reply "it's pretty good" regardless of the question asked, but it may also reflect the greater attention older people devoted to interpretive observations.

Table 1. Percentages of Responses in Each Category

| Literary Work | Age | Category I | II | III | IV | V |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Sam, Bangs, etc." | 9 | 62 | 2 | 28 | 62 | 43 |
| "If Apples, etc." | 9 | 64 | 30 | 19 | 51 | 35 |
| "Space Travellers" | 9 | 69 | 17 | 9 | 62 | 50 |
| "Space Travellers" | 13 | 66 | 32 | 32 | 53 | 43 |
| "Closing of the Rodeo" | 13 | 53 | 23 | 46 | 51 | 40 |
| "Closing of the Rodeo" | 17 | 52 | 30 | 62 | 47 | 27 |
| "Closing of the Rodeo" | Adult | 47 | 13 | 63 | 37 | 30 |

I = Engagement-Involvement
II = Perception
III = Interpretation
IV = Evaluation
V = Retelling

Adequate or better responses were rare at the younger ages. Twenty-two percent of the 9-year-olds received adequate or better scores for their responses to the story; but the figure dropped to 12% for the poem "If Apples were Pears" and 6% for the poem "Space Travellers," by James Britton. Percentages were higher for some groups--notably the extreme-affluent-suburb group and children whose parents have more than a high school education. For 13-year-olds, the percentages of adequate responses were 18% for one poem, 15% for the other. Twenty-eight percent of the 17-year-olds' and 37% of the adults' remarks were at least adequate.

Following are the exercises and a more detailed discussion of their results.

## Exercise R201

Age 9
Objective II

Instructions to the exercise administrator:

Hand the student a copy of the book, Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine, by Evaline Ness (New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966) and say,

"Now you are going to hear this story being read. Read the story to yourself as it is being read to you. When you have finished reading the story, I will ask you some questions about it. If there are any words in this story which you do not understand, ask me about them when you have finished reading the story along with the tape and I will explain them to you. Please don't ask any questions while the story is being read."

Turn on the stimulus tape recorder. When the story has been read, turn off the stimulus tape recorder and ask the student,

"Now do you have any questions?"

Be sure that the meaning of any unknown word is made clear by putting it in the language of the students, taking care not to interpret the story.

When the student is ready turn on the response tape recorder and ask questions A, B, C, and D. Record the student's response on tape, being sure that he is speaking directly into the microphone.

Give the student sufficient time to answer questions A, B, C, and D as fully as he wants. He may have the text with him. For questions B, C, and D, you should add, "Anything else?" or "Could you say more about that?" or a similar probing question. Do not, however, direct the child through questions. For example, do not ask questions such as "What is the lesson in the story" or "How does that affect the story."

Questions?

A. What was the name of the story?

B. Tell me what you most want to say about the story.

C. What did you especially notice in the story?

D. Tell me what you think about the story.

Exhibit 1. Percentage of Statements in Each Category; Ratings Within Categories

| Categories | | Ratings 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement: | 61.9% | 18.0% | 37.1% | 6.4% | .5% |
| Perception: | 1.8 | 1.2 | .5 | | |
| Interpretation: | 27.8 | .5 | 10.2 | 16.2 | .9 |
| Evaluation: | 61.7 | 55.8 | 5.2 | .7 | |
| Retelling: | 40.0 | 29.8 | 10.2 | | |

Scorers categorized responses regardless of which question (B, C, or D) elicited them. Exhibit 1 presents the percentages of responses in each category and the distribution of the ratings within each category.

About three out of every five 9-year-olds replied to at least one of the questions with a statement that could be placed in Categories I and IV. Most of the statements in Category I received ratings of 2 or 3, but this was not the case with evaluative responses, 90% of which were rated "inadequate." The usual evaluative statement consisted solely of "It was pretty good," and similar remarks.

Two of every five children retold parts of the story while responding to the questions. Most of these retellings were very perfunctory and received the lowest rating.

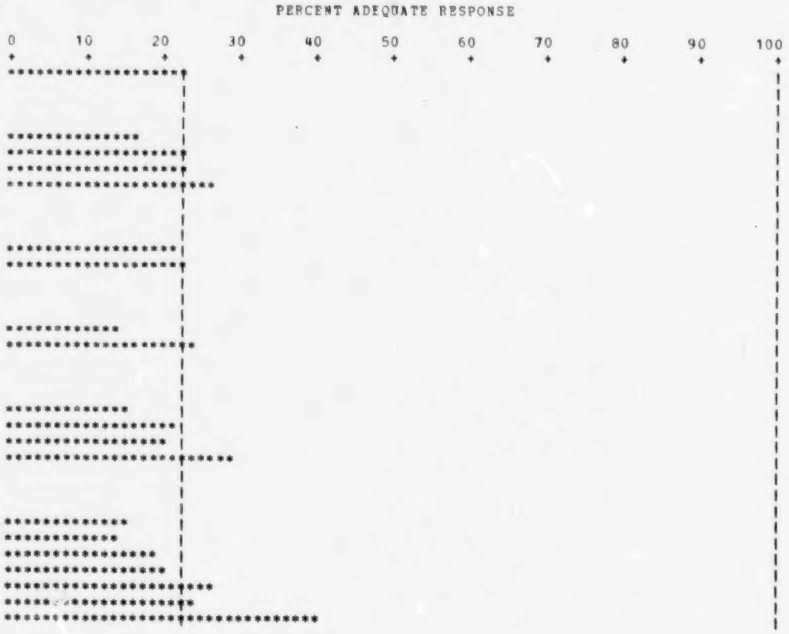
Twenty-eight percent of the respondents made interpretive statements about the story, most of them receiving barely adequate or adequate ratings. Only 2% said anything that could be defined as a perception response.

Various group breakdowns reveal that some groups had higher than national percentages of responses in certain categories. For instance, the percentage of Northeastern response in Category III was 36% as opposed to 28% for the nation, and the percentage for the affluent-suburb group was 46%. The Southeast group had higher than national percentages in Categories IV and V, and the percentage of Black statements in Category V was 63%, compared to 43% for the nation.

As Exhibit 2 reveals, 22% of the 9-year-olds received ratings of three or four on at least one of the statements they made in

## Exhibit 2. Percentage of Adequate Responses

| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 22.2 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -6.3* | 16.0 | | Southeast |
| 0.7 | 22.9 | | West |
| -0.1 | 22.1 | | Central |
| 4.5* | 26.8 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| -0.8 | 21.4 | | Male |
| 0.8 | 23.0 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -8.9* | 13.3 | | Black |
| 1.8* | 24.0 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -7.6 | 14.6 | | No High School |
| -0.9 | 21.3 | | Some High School |
| -2.7 | 19.5 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 7.0* | 29.2 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE-AND-TYPE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -7.4* | 14.8 | | Extreme Inner City |
| -8.8* | 13.4 | | Extreme Rural |
| -3.1* | 19.1 | | Small City |
| -2.3 | 19.9 | | Medium City |
| 3.8 | 26.0 | | Rest Of Big City |
| 1.8 | 24.0 | | Suburban Fringe |
| 17.6* | 39.9 | | Extreme Aff Suburb |



response to this story. The figures were significantly higher; however, for the Northeast regional group (27%), Whites (24%), and the post-high-school parental education group (29%). By far the greatest percentage of adequate or better responses (40%) appeared in the affluent-suburb group's results.

In five categories the percentages were notably lower than the national figure: the Southeast percentage was six points lower, the Black percentage was nine points lower, and the inner city, rural, and small city results were seven, nine, and three points (respectively) lower than the national figure.

The following examples illustrate the range of responses this exercise elicited.

## TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO
## "SAM, BANGS AND MOONSHINE"

### Answers to Each Question

1.
   A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.
   B. That Sam kept lying to everybody.
   C. I can't think of anything.
   D. I think it's cute.

2.
   A. Sam and Bangs.
   B. Nothing really.
   C. Nothing.
   D. I liked it very much.

3.
   A. Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine.
   B. It was fun to read and I like moonshine and Bangs.
   C. That moonshine was a lie.
   D. It was good and interesting and I liked it.

4.
   A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.
   B. It was a funny story and it had animals in it. It was make believe.

C. That she told fibs.

D. It was a nice story and it was funny.

5.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. I think it was a good book and it was sorta true. Because sometimes people do make up things in their mind and then they tell all sorts of people ------- lying, but thats what they want - it's not always true.

C. That everything she did - almost everything she did was made up in her mind. Like her cat talked to her in her mind and that she had - I think she believed that she had all the things that she said. And she made up almost everything that she said that she had.

D. I think it was a good story and I like it because it could be true - it's not impossible.

6.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. Well, it sure had a lot of unreal things in it. Well, like the mermaid, you're not a mermaid are ya? No. She told a lot of lies. But actually a gerbil doesn't stand on its two hind legs. Only when it's eating.

C. Well, I noticed that she believed that her cat could talk and she believed that the cat talked to her. But in the story the cat did talk to her. So you don't know whether to think that the cat did talk to her or that she just made it up.

D. It was a good story. It sorta teaches you a lesson.

7.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. Well, I used to lie a lot but now I don't because I've learned that I think it's little children that still lie that it would teach them a lesson.

C. Well, I was thinking when I read it - they said that the cat can't talk and I guess that she was just imagining that she was talking.

D. I liked it it was funny. It was funny because she made up that her mother was a mermaid. I really don't believe in mermaids and if Thomas is smart enough he wouldn't believe in mermaids either and then he'd know that was a big lie. And it was a silly thing for her to send him to Blue rock cause she probably knew that there could be danger there. But it was a good story.

8.

A. Sam, Bangs, Moonshine.

B. That I liked it and it was something like a real story cause I've seen some things happen like this. LIKE WHAT? Like people going around telling stories and other people coming over to their house wanting to see the things that they say they have and they don't have it and they tell them that their mother, father took them out somewhere and after a while you think about it and you think that you shouldn't tell things like that and after a while you forgive yourself and then the next thing you know it will happen for real, then you can tell somebody that you really have the things that you told them that you had.

C. That all the words they was capitalized and there was a lot of pictures in there showing the things that the story told and that it was a the pictures was big, not small like some pictures in books.

D. I think it was interesting and it was a nice story and it would be very good to say at one of my clubs and I know everyone would like it just like I did.

9.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. The girl she could make up a lot of things. It's a nice story. I was just thinking how could she make up so many things like that. She can tell more things than people that go away to far away places.

C. She thinks the cat is talking to her. She says that her cat can talk to everybody and in the book it says the cat was telling her things. I was wondering whether she was just saying that. Her mother was a mermaid she said. Her mother was dead and she said she was a mermaid and she said she had a lion and a baby kangaroo and that this carpet was a chariot and it could take her to far away worlds. It was the boy that believed everything that she said---I couldn't believe them.

D. It was pretty good. I like it because my little sister is always telling Mom that when she grows up she is going to be a dog. And another reason I like it is because my little sister when we'll be talking about animals she'll say that when she was that animal she did this or that.

10.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. That it didn't rhyme much but it told more about a story. And well, she told every thing that was make believe. That her mother was a mermaid, and she had the rug was a chariot drawn by dragons and she could travel to the moon and she had a baby kangaroo.

C. Well, it told you about how she told every thing to everyone that her mother was a mermaid when she was dead and she had a chariot that was drawn by two dragons and that she had a kangaroo.

D. Well, it sounded like a real story but it rhymed a little well every four sentences and it was nice listening to it because it was really a poem.

11.

A. Bangs and Moonshine

B. It was like the family about the sheep. The boy kept on saying that the wolf was eating the sheep. He was lying and then the wolf came and they didn't believe him and the wolf ate up the sheep. The girl learned a lesson. If her father wasn't there Thomas wouldn't be alive.

C. I noticed that Sam was always telling lies. She told Thomas lies and then at the end, she gave the gerbil to

Thomas. She thought that it was right to give the gerbil to Thomas.

D. I think that it is all right.

12.

A. Sam, Bangs and Moonshine.

B. Well, Sam was telling a lot of fibs - a boy named Thomas kept on coming over when her father left to go fishing she told him not to tell any more stories and she kept telling about how her mother was a mermaid and she had a lion and one of those things that you pull by dragons and then she told Thomas that she had a kangaroo and the kangaroo had stepped and then Thomas went looking everywhere for it and then Bangs went everywhere looking for it. And Thomas got washed but then when her father came her father said, Bangs and Thomas is out there and her father went out there to look for them and he found Thomas but he didn't find Bangs cause Bangs was washed off. And then she went to bed - Bangs came to the window and saw him scratching on the window and then she said cats can't really talk and then her father went on out the door and she went to sleep and then she looked and she saw a kangaroo, she thought it was a kangaroo, but it was a gerbil and then her father said he found it off a African banana boat and then Thomas was sick in bed and so she took the gerbil over to Thomas and he said What's that and then he said it's a gerbil and then she was standing right there and she stopped telling stories.

C. She kept on telling all those fibs and she wasn't supposed to tell all those fibs about her mother and everything.

D. What I think about the story is supposed to be telling no fibs for real and she knew her mother was dead, she kept on telling that her mother was a mermaid and she had a dragon that pulled a chariot, and a lion and a kangaroo and the kangaroo kept on stepping out and looking for ----- and she say he kept on going up the tree and looking for Bangs and then Thomas caught a bad fever and she took the gerbil over to him. DID YOU LIKE THE STORY? Yes. ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT IT? Well, Thomas caught thought it was a kangaroo --------father let it --- it was a baby kangaroo, but it wasn't a baby kangaroo, he said it was gerbil that came off a African banana boat.

# Categorized Answers

## Category I: Engagement - Involvement

### Score = 1

I liked it.
It's very interesting.
It's a cute one.
It was funny.
It was scary.
It was a little mysterious.
It makes me feel happy.
It was very exciting.

### Score = 2

It was nice of her to give the gerbil to the boy.
It's a make-believe story.
I wish I had three books like this. I wish they would print more because it's a good book to read.
I like it but I usually don't like make-believe stories.
It's exciting and you get kinda scared for a minute and then you know they're safe and all that.
Some parts of it were funny like when she said she had a kangaroo and a chariot.
I don't think it was a good name to call a girl Sam.
I wonder - how can somebody get covered all over with waves and get knocked away a mile without sinking?

### Score = 3

I thought it was a good story and it was real. I feel sorry for the little girl. . .the little girl made up the stories and I thought it was the real thing but it wasn't.
It taught me some things. I shouldn't say bad moonshine and I should say the things that are real and I shouldn't lie.
There is a real place called Blue Rock and the cat has the same name as my uncle.
If somebody was doing something like that and they read this book, they'd probably realize what they were doing wrong.
Well, I used to lie alot but now I don't because I've learned that I think it's little children that still lie that it would teach them a lesson.

It is real nice and it is real educational and you should go to the library and read a lot of books. That's what my sister said, to read a lot of books and you'd learn more.

Score = 4

It's kind of like lying and what little children like to do. I did a lot of it when I was in the first grade. I didn't have any first cousins and I just pretended that I had them.

It was a very nice story and very imaginative and the girl--it is like another story that I read with another girl and she was always imagining that her mother was cleaning the house. She had another house but she was living in this old ragged one, until they could move into the big house.

I liked it, it was funny. It was funny because she made up that her mother was a mermaid. I really didn't believe in mermaids and if Thomas is smart enough he wouldn't believe in mermaids either and then he'd know that was a big lie. And it was a silly thing for her to send him to Blue Rock cause she probably knew that there could be danger there.

I've read the story before. It's very interesting and it has beautiful pictures. I used to tell my neighbors the same things that weren't true like I had another sister and all my cousins were millionaires.

There is no such things as dragons and stuff now. She never even had a mermaid mother and I don't think there is such things as mermaids. I know the cat can't talk because I've had one, it froze. My dad found it out in the shed. Her name is Samatha and on Bewitched the witch - they call her Sam. I never saw anybody that could lie as much as she did. I never knew somebody could have a live lion in their house.

Category II: Perception - Analysis (This category was seldom used.)

Score = 1

It had a good title. It was a long story.
It rhymed.

Score = 2

It was pretty good because it is a long story. Because those tell more about the story and short ones don't tell enough about the stories.

I think that the person that wrote it had a very good make believe mind.

Score = 3

No Samples.

Score = 4

No Samples.

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

I don't get it.
It has alot of meaning.
It doesn't make sense.
Moonshine I didn't know anything about that.

Score = 2

It was a good story and it taught a lesson.
It tells the difference between real and moonshine.
She learned a lesson from what she did.
Sam shouldn't have been lying that much.
Moonshine is kind of like the moon that shines real light.
It was sort of sad and sort of happy, too.

Score = 3

It taught the girl a lesson - not to lie.
You cannot tell lies because you'll get somebody in trouble.
You should never imagine things that are not there.
That sometimes when you say alot of stories like you really believe them sometimes people find they believe in these and kinda get in trouble and get a cold or something.
The little girl was going to learn that she couldn't lie and that would just get her into trouble.
Never get in the habit of lying.
It tells what might happen if you begin telling lies and little make-up things.
It's all right. I liked it. When somebody lies they always get what they deserve - the boy almost drowned.

Score = 4

It was a good story. Because the girl lied so much about everything. I could tell when Bang's wasn't there it changed her and turned her from lying to telling the truth.

I noticed that she lies a lot and Thomas suffered a lot trying to find the kangaroo. Thomas suffered a lot because Sam was always saying things that made Thomas suffer. When she saw Bangs wasn't gone she gave the gerbil to Thomas and it was a present for her lying. It changed her. She gave the gerbil away because she thought she didn't deserve it. Like she lied to all her friend -- no one would really believe her.

It was a good story that tells you a moral. The moral was not to lie because if you lie you might get somebody in trouble and you might kill somebody that you don't want to.

Not to lie to people or something will happen real bad. That after she had lied to him he got sick and she gave him the gerbil so that he would forgive her for what she did. It's real good because it can teach people not to lie.

Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It was a good story to read.
It was well written.
It was better than the poem was.
It's pretty good.
I noticed it was good and some of it was bad.

Score = 2

It is good. Because it talks about down at the shore.
It's a nice story because the little girl is sad about the cat.
I think it's a nice story cause it had a lot of lies in it.
It was pretty good. It had a happy ending.
I think it's good because she said she always had all that stuff at her house.
It is a good story because I like cats.
I think that it was a nice story because now she knows the difference between moonshine and real.

Score = 3

It was good because it showed that lying isn't very good.
It's good because there are some people that lie like that and when they get into trouble they find out it's not good to tell lies and stuff like that.
It was a good story but it was kind of sad in the middle where she thought she lost the cat and then it was a good story at the end because the cat came back.
It was good because it taught the little girl a lesson.
It is a good story because it said the lesson, to not do things that aren't true. Like to say that your mother is a mermaid or something.
I thought it was a good story because it teaches us not to lie and that you can have trouble if you lie a lot.

Score = 4

No Samples.

Category V: Retelling the story.

Score = 1

To get score of 1, student must:

(A) retell one event in the story,
(B) do a poor job of summarizing the story,
(C) make a significant error in retelling an event or the total story,
(D) give a retelling response independent of any A, B, C, or D response.

There was a baby kangaroo and she got up and gave it to Thomas.
Thomas and Bangs got washed away in a storm.
The cat was talking. The cat got washed away.
It is about a girl named Samantha and everybody called her Sam. She had a little kitty. She always thought that her mother was a mermaid and she was dead. She thought she had a baby kangaroo. Thomas went out in the woods and tried to find a cat. She was by the blue rock.
There was a tide coming in and Tom's bicycle got lost in the storm.
She kept telling sailors that she had a mermaid woman. And she thought Bangs told her that it was moonshine.

One thing I especially noticed is that when Thomas came he would ask Sam if he could see her baby kangaroo and she would always say that it just went out. And everywhere that Thomas would go, he would go everywhere that she would say it.

When the gerbil walked on its hind legs. Bangs was gone. When the man opened the door and there sat Bangs. The baby kangaroo got lost and it came back. She ran and placed the gerbil on Thomas' bed.

Score = 2 (A summary of the story, giving all significant parts, and giving little or no interpretation in it.)

I'd say it's about a girl and her father and her cat and a boy named Thomas. The girl always said that her mother was a mermaid but her mother wasn't alive. And she said that - she told her friend Thomas that her front porch - the mat thing - was a chariot pulled by dragons and that she had a baby kangaroo and that she told Thomas that would be out at blue rock and he went out there and the waves - there was a storm and the waves hit him and the cat.

When Bangs, and she said her mother was a mermaid and she told one of her friends that her mother was down at the blue rock and she didn't tell him the tide would come early. All of a sudden the tide comes and the next minute he was at the lighthouse and then her father walked in the door and she told him where they were. He ran down there and he prayed that the tide hadn't washed them away. Where is the kitten. Her father said he got washed away. She was in bed and she saw him in the window and her dad bought her a gerbil and she took it to her friend.

Well, she was telling lies. She said that she had a baby kangaroo, an elephant and that her mother was a mermaid behind Blue Rock. There's this boy named Thomas - he came over everyday and he lived up the hill. He had 2 cows, 25 sheep, a bicycle and a basket, and a jungle gym in the lawn. He always went down there because he wanted to see Sams' baby kangaroo. He climbed up trees just to find if it was visiting the owls. She told it to go every place. One day he went down by the Blue Rock, there was a storm and her father came home and she told him that Sams and Bangs - I mean Thomas and Bangs was down by the Blue Rock and he went down there quickly. That's the part that I really liked. And when he came back he couldn't find her, he found Thomas but not Bangs and Bangs was over at the lighthouse and I like lighthouses. Sams' father was a - well, he took care of boats and he had laryngitis and her father said that when she talked about things that weren't really true, he called it moonshine, he said there was real and there was moonshine. When Bangs got lost he was there at the lighthouse really and he came back and he was scratching on the window - she opened up the window and let Bangs back in and her father was standing at the door. She woke up the next morning and she found a gerbil and she said she would take it over to Thomas which I would have done also and they liked each other I think. She ran till she was by the side of Thomas' bed and she put the gerbil down on his stomach and they were grazing at each other and looking, he said, Whaaaaa's his name? Wheezed Thomas. And he gave Bangs a big smile.

# Exercise R202

Age 9
Objective II

Instructions to exercise administrators:

Hand the student a copy of the poem and say, "I am going to turn on a tape recorder on which you will hear this poem being read. Read the poem to yourself as it is being read to you. When you have finished reading the poem, I will ask you some questions." Turn on the tape recorder and when the poem has been read, turn off the tape recorder and say to the student, "Now do you have any questions?" When the student is ready, continue with questions A, B, and C.

Record the student's responses verbatim in legible handwriting. DO NOT attempt to interpret what he is saying in your written record. Take down exactly what and all that he says.

Give the student sufficient time to answer each question as fully as he wants. The student may have the text with him. You may add, "Anything else?" to each of these questions or, "Could you say more about that?" or a similar probing question. Do not, however, direct the subject through questions. For example, do not ask questions such as "What is the lesson in the poem?" or "How does that affect the poem?"

> If apples were pears,
> And peaches were plums,
> And the rose had a different name;
> If tigers were bears,
> And fingers were thumbs,
> I'd love you just the same!
>
> Anonymous

A. Tell me what you most want to say about the poem.

B. What did you especially notice in the poem?

C. Tell me what you think about the poem.

Exhibit 3. Percentages of Statements in Each
Category; Ratings Within Categories.

| Categories | | Ratings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Involvement: | 63.6% | 22.1% | 35.1% | 6.2% | .2% |
| Perception: | 30.4 | 3.5 | 26.5 | .4 | |
| Interpretation: | 18.7 | 2.6 | 10.5 | 5.5 | .1 |
| Evaluation: | 50.4 | 46.7 | 3.7 | | |
| Retelling: | 32.5 | 30.8 | 1.5 | | |

Exhibit 3 presents the percentages of responses and ratings in each category. The response pattern differs markedly from the pattern found for Exercise R201.

Almost two-thirds of the children made at least one engagement-involvement remark while responding to the questions. Most of these received low ratings. The post-high-school parental education group's percentage in this category was 71%.

Probably because it is a poem, this stimulus evoked a great many more perception responses than did Sam, Bangs and Moonshine. Most of these were rated barely adequate, and consisted of remarks such as "It rhymes," or "It's short." A higher percentage of students from the Central region made perception remarks than did in the nation as a whole.

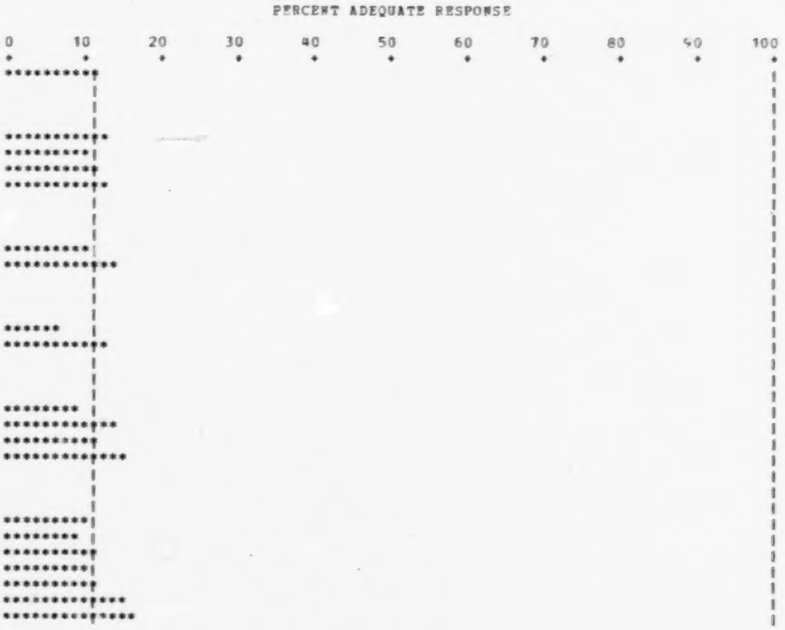
Only one child in five made an interpretive response to this poem; however, half of these were termed barely adequate and one-fourth of them received adequate ratings. Four groups--the Northeast, Whites, post high school and affluent suburbs--registered higher percentages in this category than the national percentage.

Half of the 9-year-olds made evaluative statements, but once again these were very perfunctory and received low ratings. The Northeast group, the Blacks, and the inner city STOC group all had higher than national percentages in this category.

Retellings amounted to literal repetitions of lines from the poem. About one child in three made such statements while responding to the poem. The proportion was higher for the high school group (47%), the rural STOC group (49%), and Blacks (44%).

## Exhibit 4. Percentages of Adequate Responses

| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 11.9 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| 0.9 | 12.8 | | Southeast |
| -1.6 | 10.2 | | West |
| -0.1 | 11.8 | | Central |
| 0.7 | 12.5 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| -1.3 | 10.6 | | Male |
| 1.4 | 13.2 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -5.3* | 6.6 | | Black |
| 0.9* | 12.8 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -3.3 | 8.6 | | No High School |
| 1.6 | 13.5 | | Some High School |
| -1.1 | 10.7 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 3.1* | 14.9 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE-AND-TYPE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -2.0 | 9.8 | | Extreme Inner City |
| -3.0 | 8.9 | | Extreme Rural |
| -0.6 | 11.3 | | Small City |
| -1.6 | 10.2 | | Medium City |
| -0.5 | 11.4 | | Rest Of Big City |
| 2.7 | 14.5 | | Suburban Fringe |
| 4.7 | 16.6 | | Extreme Aff Suburb |



As Exhibit 4 reveals, 12% of the 9-year-olds received a rating of three or four on at least one statement made in response to the poem. The percentage was slightly higher for Whites and for children in the post high school parental education category; it was somewhat lower (6.6%) for Blacks.

Following are sample responses to this exercise.

### VERBAL RESPONSES TO "IF APPLES WERE PEARS"

### Answers to Each Question

1.

A. And peaches were plums. I'd love you just the same. And the rose had a different name.

B. It was indented. It was straight in a row.

C. I think it was a good poem.

2.

A. That I wish apples were pears because I like pears.

B. That it rhymed. That they would change . . . like a tiger to a bear.

C. I don't know anything about it but I liked it.

3.

A. It would be weird if apples were plums.

B. The rose had a different name.

C. I don't think it would every happen.

4.

A. And the rose had a different name. If tigers were bears, and fingers were thumbs, and peaches were plums.

B. That if tigers were bears, and peaches were plums, and apples were pears, and the rose had different names, and fingers were thumbs.

C. It's funny. It's kind of different.

5.

A. It was a good poem. It was interesting. There is opposites in it.

B. That there is a dot over the comma. There is not a period there.

C. I don't know. I can't think of anything.

6.

A. It is very pretty. I don't wish tigers were bears. If it was on the market, I'd like to have one.

B. It was to a boy or girl or to a woman or man. That they don't know who wrote it.

C. It is very nice.

7.

A. Different. How could apples be plums and rose have another name? How could it? How could fingers be thumbs?

B. I love you just the same.

C. I don't like it. How could four fingers be one thumb?

8.

A. If everything was different they'd still love the same.

B. All the things they mentioned like the apples and animals.

C. I don't think it's too good because he's changing everything around and putting something else on the bottom.

9.

A. It rhymes a lot. It is not true exactly. Fingers are thumbs; tigers would not be bears.

B. "I'd love you just the same"--yes it did tell the truth, rose could be called a carnation--in a way--they look the same. Anonymous--I can't pronounce it.

C. It rhymes a lot--be good for a little child just starting to read. If apples were pears they would taste good. You have two fingers that are thumbs.

10.

A. It had a lot of "ifs" in it.

B. If other animals were different animals. If a rose had a different name, then I wouldn't know it. If fruits were other fruits. If your fingers were your thumbs.

C. It was nice. It seems as if it were written by a daydreamer.

11.

A. It's a lot different than other poems. If fingers were thumbs, you would only have one finger and four thumbs.

B. There are three "ands" and two "ifs" starting out.

C. It's different than other ones I've read because they have a whole bunch of animal names and the other ones I've read don't.

12.

I think it's a good poem. The rhyming words - it can symbolize somebody - like a pear or a rose. Or when they get mean you can symbolize them as a bear or a tiger. When he said, "I'd love you just the same," he means he will always love her, no matter what. It's a nice poem. I like it so much that I want to make up my own poem using the same words.

> When you get mad you're just like a tiger,
> When you get mad you're just like a bear,
> And when you wriggle your fingers and twitch
> your thumbs,
> You're just like a peachy rose.

## Categorized Answers

### Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

I think it's funny.
I liked it.
It was different.

Score = 2

It's very pretty and if I wrote it I'd have it published.
What color are the roses?
It's not really true.

It's funny, because apples can't be pears, peaches can't be plums, tigers can't be bears.
It's a lovely poem for 9-year-olds to read and get something out of it.

Score = 3

It's an odd poem, because it is trying to change everything around. Really if things were that way, it wouldn't seem off at all because we'd be used to them.

## Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1

(Statements which are factually incorrect or meaning of which is very unclear)
(One word answers - or one phrase - with no idea expressed)
Commas.
Every line started with a capital letter.

Score = 2

It's a short poem. Only has one stanza.
It has rhymes in it.
It rhymed with the other words like it's supposed to be in a poem.
It's in the right order and it has like they skip a line and it doesn't rhyme, and then maybe the next line rhymes with one of the other ones.

Score = 3

It's almost like limericks where every other line rhymes.

## Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

It doesn't make sense. (or does)
I don't understand it.
It has meaning in it.

Score = 2

He said if anything was different he'd still love it.
They were changing things around just to make it different.
Everything backwards. You don't see a poem like that very often. I think a man might wrote it to a lady or something.
It's a love poem.
It's a fruit poem.

Score = 3

I'd love you just the same - no matter how different you are, that anyone would love you just the same.
I think it has meaning. No matter how different you look from someone else you should be yourself and anyone would love you just the same.
It means even if you are different he'll still love you.

## Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It's good.
It's a nice poem.
It's a stupid poem.
It's silly.

Score = 2

It is written well. It's wonderful and has a lot of pleasing things in it.
It's a good one and the rhymes made sense. It was written nice.

## Category V: Retelling

Score = 1

It was talking about fruit and changing it around.
About if apples and pears and the whole poem - about apples, pears, peaches and plums.
They're talking about different like if tiger were bear and stuff like that.

Fingers are thumbs like some fingers on the hand were thumbs - apples should be pears.

Score = 2

About at the end they are listing all the different things and then they say they would love them just the same.

Everything was either animals, flowers or fruits - they matched a fruit with a fruit, an animal with an animal and gave it a different name.

## Exercise R203

Ages 13, 17, Adult
Objective II

Instructions to exercise administrators:

Hand the student a copy of the poem "The Closing of the Rodeo" and say,

> "Now you are going to hear this poem being read. Read the poem to yourself as it is being read to you. When you have finished reading the poem, I will ask you some questions."

Turn on the tape recorder, and when the poem has been read, say to the student,

> "Now do you have any questions?"

When the student is ready, turn off the recorder containing the prepared tape. Be sure that he speaks directly into the microphone of the second tape recorder.

Give the student sufficient time to answer questions A, B, and C as fully as he wants. The student may have the text with him. You may add,

> "Anything else?"

to each of these questions or

> "Could you say more about that?"

*Do not*, however, direct the subject through the questions. For example, *do not* ask questions such as "What is the lesson in the poem?" or "How does that affect the poem?"

A. Is there anything you want to say about this poem? Tell me about it.

B. What did you particularly notice about the poem?

C. What do you think of the poem?

The Closing of the Rodeo*

The lariat snaps; the cowboy rolls

material deleted due to copyright
restrictions

Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves.

William Jay Smith

Exhibit 5. Percentages of Statements in Each Category; Ratings Within Categories

Engagement-Involvement

| Age | % in Category | Rating 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 53.2% | 18.2% | 31.1% | 3.8% | |
| 17 | 52.7 | 21.1 | 24.3 | 6.7 | .6% |
| Ad. | 47.3 | 20.9 | 18.5 | 6.3 | 1.7 |

Perception-Analysis

| Age | % in Category | Rating 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 22.5 | 1.5 | 20.3 | .7 | |
| 17 | 29.1 | 8.1 | 19.2 | 1.8 | |
| Ad. | 27.8 | 12.5 | 11.5 | 2.9 | 1.0 |

Interpretation

| Age | % in Category | Rating 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 46.0 | 5.1 | 26.2 | 13.5 | 1.3 |
| 17 | 61.2 | 10.9 | 28.3 | 17.5 | 4.5 |
| Ad. | 64.2 | 8.9 | 23.1 | 23.5 | 8.1 |

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*From Celebration at Dark, by William Jay Smith. Reprinted by permission of Farrar and Strauss.

Exhibit 5. (cont.)

Evaluation

| Age | % in Category | Rating |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | 51.2 | 44.3 | 6.7 |  |  |
| 17 | 47.2 | 39.5 | 7.6 |  |  |
| Ad. | 37.1 | 32.6 | 3.6 |  |  |
|  | Retelling |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | 40.8 | 27.1 | 12.5 | .7 |  |
| 17 | 27.1 | 20.8 | 5.1 | 1.2 |  |
| Ad. | 29.4 | 19.2 | 8.9 | .8 |  |

## Results for 13-Year-Olds

As Exhibit 5 reveals, slightly more than half the 13-year-olds made at least one statement that could be classified as an engagement-involvement response. The proportion was higher for females (57%) and for the rest-of-big-city group (65%).

Twenty-three percent of the students made Category II responses, most of which were rated barely adequate because they were brief.

Forty-six percent of the respondents made interpretive remarks of one kind or another, some suggesting the poem was about pollution. Greater percentages appeared for the Northeast (55%), the post-high-school group (58%) and the affluent-suburb group (55%). More than a third of these statements received an adequate or superior rating.

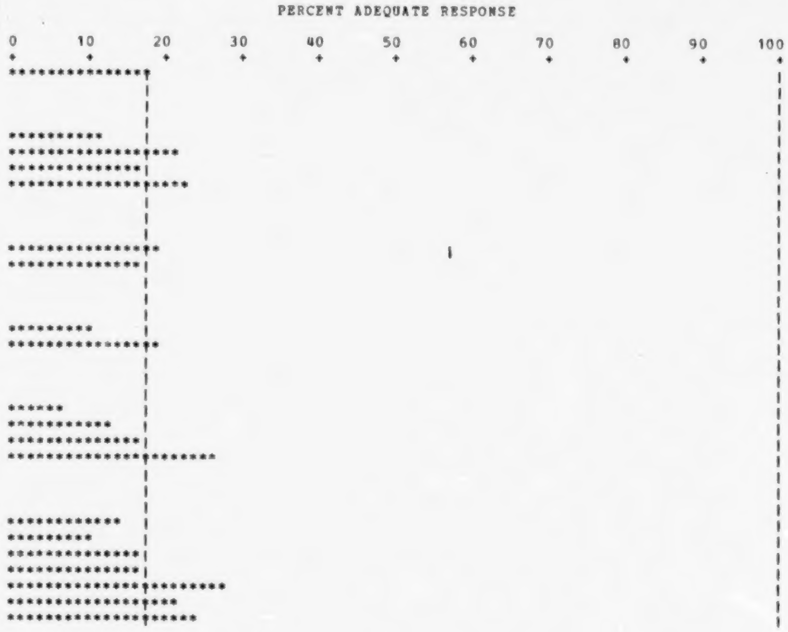
Half the 13-year-olds made evaluative responses but more than four-fifths of them were rated inadequate because they were unsupported and vague.

Two out of every five students responded to the questions with at least one statement that was a retelling of part of the poem. Groups with higher proportions than this were: the Southeast (50%), Blacks (48%), the some-high-school parental education group (49%), and the rural STOC group (52%).

Exhibit 6 displays the national and group percentages of 13-year-olds who received ratings of three or four on at least one of their statements about the poem. The national figure was 18%.

Exhibit 6. Percentages of Adequate Responses, Age 13

| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 17.9 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -6.6* | 11.4 | | Southeast |
| 3.8 | 21.8 | | West |
| -1.1 | 16.8 | | Central |
| 4.4 | 22.4 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| 1.3 | 19.2 | | Male |
| -1.3 | 16.7 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -7.3* | 10.6 | | Black |
| 1.4* | 19.3 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -11.1* | 6.8 | | No High School |
| -5.7* | 12.3 | | Some High School |
| -2.1 | 15.8 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 8.8* | 26.7 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE-AND-TYPE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -4.5 | 13.5 | | Extreme Inner City |
| -8.1* | 9.8 | | Extreme Rural |
| -1.9 | 16.0 | | Small City |
| -2.0 | 15.9 | | Medium City |
| 9.2 | 27.1 | | Rest Of Big City |
| 3.8 | 21.8 | | Suburban Fringe |
| 5.3 | 23.2 | | Extreme Aff Suburb |



Only two groups--the Whites and the highest parental education category--registered percentages significantly higher than the national figure. However, five groups emerged with notably lower than national percentages: the Southeast (-7%), Blacks (-7%), the no- and some-high-school groups (-11% and -6%, respectively), and the extreme-rural group (-8%).

Following are some sample 13-year-old responses to this exercise.

# TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO "CLOSING OF THE RODEO" Age 13

## Answers to Each Question

1.

A. I've never been to a rodeo and it kind of like describes how a rodeo might have been. This one is different too.

B. It was kind of hard to understand what they meant by saying, it was complicated like.

C. It was a good poem. It didn't rhyme very much. I thought poems should always rhyme, but this one didn't rhyme very well.

2.

A. It describes everything real well, too. It describes the cowboy and everything he done and what it was like.

B. He's going away somewhere.

C. It's a good short poem. It's sad. When it says the closing of the rodeo it gives a sad title to it and when it says goodbye.

3.

A. It pretty well explains the cowboys and about the rodeo. It tells about how a town burns and what happens to it.

B. About the cowboy when he rides away from the rodeo. Going back to where he usually lives. It's a good poem.

C. It's a good poem about cowboys and how a town burns and what you see after the town burns. About the rain on the roofs and when it leaves and how you don't see it in the summer. About when like its raining outside and in the midsummer you don't hardly see rain in the summer like in the winter.

4.

A. It seems like it was a sort of like a rodeo came into the town and it was ending and it seemed so long since, lonesome that it was leaving. It was just like someone goes away and you feel like you don't want to go this is the way it is the same in here. It was telling about the horses and it looked like it was in a western town almost, cause they saw the barber poles and the vanishing horses hooves. And it said the plume of smoke of the factory swum in the setting sun, it made me think of the factory smoke just going off. It made me think of a western town because of the cowboys and it was a rodeo alright. That was it.

B. I noticed one thing that it didn't have much of characters in it. It just said his.

C. I think it is a good one, because it tells about the closing of the rodeo and it is telling about how they are leaving and how it is going to be when the rodeo is gone.

5.

A. I think the author is trying to say something to the people especially when he say that plumes of smoke from the factory sway in the setting sun. I think he's trying to say that the final days of the rodeo has come, cause the factorys have moved in and the finer entertainments have come along and the people just don't care for the rodeo anymore. Just that it's the final days of the rodeo and the cowboy goes back to the country and tries to live the life he's used to.

B. Well, first the lariat snaps; the cowboy rolls his pack. That shows that he's going away and he's going back in to the country and he mounts and rides away. And the plumes of smoke from the factory, very puffy clouds it seemed, maybe dark ones. And the train in the darkness and the hard iron roofs from the houses in the city. And the dark drum of the vanishing horses', I think this means that the cars have come to take the place of the horses.

C. Well, I think this a very good poem. It's very well written and very descriptive of all the things if showed around it. So you can see it in your mind from his words. I think is what the whole idea behind poetry is. It's the whole thought and your view.

6.

A. If this was some hippy writing this, and this had a different meaning, you would think this was a poem of pollution. Plumes of smoke from the factory and the setting sun, the curtain falls like a curtain of pollution. And goodbye says the rain on the iron roofs, that is saying goodbye to pollution.

B. The seriousness of it, the way the person read it.

C. I like it because it has alot of meaning to me about pollution. If I was in Congress, I'd have all the cars stopped and all that too, but unfortunately I'm not.

7.

A. It says--you can tell it goes very well with the title, and it shows in verses the different ideas of the closing of the rodeo. You can tell by the way he puts it that it is the closing of the rodeo. You can tell it's at night and it's time to go home and everything is started to get dark and the sun is setting.

B. It noticed the second verse where it told different thing that were sort of ending the day and closing.

C. It was short and it expressed it's ideas right out and they were very plain. They went along with the title perfectly.

8.

A. I think of a cowboy riding and I think of a man riding a horse and getting away from the city and being free again and not having ties with industrial city and modern world. I feel that to me this gives me a feeling of freedom and getting away from it all and losing all your up tightness.

B. The free feeling, but I like the sentence the curtain fall and I really think it's true because there is so much of a division of the different lives that they give. The cowboy and the hustle and bustle of the city and the cars and trains and that's the only way we know how to travel. The cowboy he rides on a horse he's his own man and he's not tied to anybody. He doesn't worry about society and what will people think if he does a certain thing.

C. I like this poem and I like it better than the other one. The other one shows me the advances but this one gives me a feeling of going back into the old world. There is no up tightness with the problem of drugs and pollution and everything. You think of all the fresh air and people. But today the younger generation just doesn't seem to care about alot of things that they cared about in older days.

## Categorized Answers

Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

I think it is really cool.
I liked the other one better than this one.
I didn't like this one. It didn't sound too good.
It was an interesting poem.

Score = 2

I don't like those kind of poems - I don't like cowboys.
It reminds me of show's I've seen and books I've read.
I don't like cowboys that much. I don't like the poem. I don't like the way it was written. I liked both poems a little bit.
I think it's a bit scary - how the horses vanish.
It was a little bit crazy, because it talks about the setting sun and then about the rain.
The poem is easy. I don't know what grade of poem this is, but I know it is easy.
I like the way it was put because mostly I look at cowboy movies on TV and my mother gets mad. I think I got it from my brother because I'm the oldest girl.

Score = 3

You have to listen to it a little more if you don't get it at first. It puts you in the feeling of a rodeo. It seems like a poor day for a rodeo.
Well, it sounds like something you'd see at the movies or something like at the ending of a horse movie where a cowboy would be riding off on his horse, like in a John Wayne movie or something.

I like it - it was better than the other poem. I like things that are Western and things that aren't so modern, and to live on a farm where it is fresh and clean and not so much smog here in the city.

It made me sad to think of the cowboy having to leave everything.

I don't like it because: first they are talking lariat and that usually means cowboys in a western, second they talk about factories and that reminds me of cities and the setting sun. We usually don't notice the setting sun over here because we are usually at work or at school or something. In the west they want to sit in the sun and have parties and dance alot. When the sun goes down everybody notices it ---- in the west. It talks about iron roofs, but in the west they have wooded roofs-----iron is expensive-----people in the west, I don't believe they have that many iron roofs.

I liked it. I think it expresses the feeling you get after circuses and stuff or some activity. You wish it could keep on or a little longer. It is good. It is pretty easy. It still is beautiful.

It's kind of interesting too, you know like that's how I would feel if I was leaving, cause I like horses and open country and everything, so I would be kind of sad to go back to the city and everything cause of fresh air and everything and you go back to the city and it's all polluted and everything.

Score = 4

It sounds like a cowboy rodeo, because it seems to me like cowboys and people like that are out in the country alot. To me it sounded like the cowboys are the neatest things, so I think a cowboy wrote it.

It says plumes of smoke from the factory sway. Well, cowboys you know are out in the desert and nature and the factory smoke make me think about smog and cowboys they like nature.

It didn't really keep my interest as much as the one before did. It reminds me alot of riding horses and I like to ride horses. That is what I like about it the most. It tells about the cowboy rolls, it sounds like he fell off his horse. That reminds me this summer I was thrown off a horse.

I think of a cowboy riding and I think of a man riding a horse and getting away from the city and being free again and not having ties with industrial city and modern world. I feel that to me this gives me a feeling of freedom and getting away from it all and losing all your up tightness.

The free feeling, but I like the sentence the curtain fall and I really think it's true because there is so much of a division of the different lives that they give. The cowboy and the hustle and bustle of the city and the cars and trains and that's the only way we know how to travel. The cowboy he rides on a horse he's his own man and he's not tied to anybody. He doesn't worry about society and what will people think if he does a certain thing.

I like this poem and I like it better than the other one. The other one shows me the advances but this one gives me a feeling of going back into the old world. There is no up tightness with the problem of drugs and pollution and everything. You think of all the fresh air and people. But today the younger generation just doesn't seem to care about alot of things that they cared about in older days.

Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1 (Factually incorrect)

The last two words in the two lines and second one and the first one they rhyme.

It doesn't go together. It doesn't stick to the subject.

Well, it has like it doesn't just tell you words and it had alot of modifiers in it like rain - it doesn't say the word but it tells you more about it.

Score = 2 (Superficial or very brief)

The way it was written - it's written like a play - like somebody is playing the parts.

It rhymed.

Some of the words didn't rhyme.

I thought it should have had more details and longer.

(I noticed) that it comes in sections. It's got three sections with three lines to a section.

(I noticed) well that the lines were set up different from the other one.

It seems like it is some kind of a play instead of a poem because it says the curtain falls.

Score = 3

(I noticed) that there are three stanzas, three lines, and it is about a cowboy. There is personification in the third line - good-by says the rain on the iron roofs, good-by says the barber poles.

You can tell it goes very well with the title, and it shows in verses the different ideas of the closing of the rodeo. You can tell by the way he puts it that it is the closing of the rodeo. . .I noticed the second verse where it told different things that were sort of ending the day and closing. It was short and expressed the ideas right out and they were very plain. They went along with the title perfectly.

It had a good melodic sound to it. . .Practically all the lines here rhyme with something and they talked about three different things. . .It sticks to the main point.

Score = 4

(No samples.)

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

I don't understand it. I didn't get the story.

Score = 2

Every paragraph is different things but it means the same thing. - that someone is going somewhere.

It pretty well explains the cowboys and about the rodeo. It tells how a town burns and what happened to it.

It gives an example of when they didn't have automobiles and factories and how much different it was from today.

Sounds like a cowboy that is going away, away from a town that he lived in. Maybe he might be going into town to join a rodeo.

It's a sad poem.

Score = 3

It's been a hard day - that's the impression I get. That he was really worn out and tired out and now it's time to move on. He found that there was a time to rest and a time to work.

I think that this poem compares the days of earlier America with now so that whoever reads this could form their own opinion if it is really better now or then in this country. It was a comparison of America at different times.

It was talking about a cowboy. This cowboy was in a contest to try to see who could ride a cow - how he used a rope to hold a cow. He got fed up - he left so he said good-by.

This man is showing about air pollution or any kind of pollution because he starts off with the cowboy. He rolls his pack and mounts away quiet. He went on to his business. He wasn't really interested in progress, he just went on the way that he did. He wanted to keep the world the way that it was. Later he goes on, the factories smoke in the setting sun and the curtain falls. He tells about how the world is becoming darker because of pollution and how it is ending the world. He finishes off with dark drum the vanishing horse's hooves. I guess he would rather be living now than when the cowboy was living, when the cowboy was living, when there was peace and not so much air pollution. (etc.)

In the first paragraph, in the whole thing, it seems sad like the cowboy really doesn't want to go, but he hardly has a choice.

I noticed that like the cowboy he wasn't really happy and he was packing his pack and he was ready to ride. And he kept saying goodbye and he didn't really sound happy. And I don't think he was either.

This poem is about a cowboy that use to work at a rodeo and it is time to close up and he is getting on his horse and he is riding away. And as he is riding away he is saying goodbye and I think he is very sad.

Well-it tells about a change in times - like it says the cowboy rolls his pack mounts and rides away - Back to the land and it might mean that times have rolled - like - are vanishing like the horses hoofs and that new things - the factories are coming in and taking place of the old.

The part where it says plumes of smoke from the factory - I could say that it signifies the new things you know like cars and things like that.

It shows how civilization has changed in the last century. It starts off with the cowboy and out West. Then it goes on to how civilization has changed all this by telling about the smoke from the factories and transportation differed from a horse to a train. Then it says good-by to the different things that have been around since then and he's they've gone and won't be around any more. It tried to get the point across of how civilization has changed and man has changed, where they are going and where they have been.

I think they are talking about a rodeo and they are coming into town, all excited, and there is alot of commotion, and whenever a rodeo closes down everything quiets down and goes back to normal. The last paragraph they said good-by, the barber poles, the people just go back to what they were doing. I think it expresses the way people feel - they are all happy and when something is happening and certain events are going on, and the reaction to the people when this is over.

It seems like the cowboy is being pushed out of his old way in the old West and progress is moving in. And so, like the cowboy and his horse can be no more and the train coming in - it can't ever be like it used to be.

I think it sort of uses like the impression of the cowboy is giving away to the factories and the pollution. The cowboy led his life out in the fresh air and stuff like that and bow there's hardly any left and he just sort of rides off.

It's sort of deceiving at first because you think he's going to talk about the rodeo itself. But he talks about the rodeo symbolizing the entire age of the west and the cowboys and that because everything is going like that out in the west.

Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It was all right.
It was good and bad.
It was pretty dumb and stupid.
It was okay if you happen to like poems.
It was very nice.

Score = 2

I think it's a good poem - it tells alot about what cowboys do.

It's good except in the respect that it's a little babyish. The wording is very good in it.

The first one was good because it talked about him but the second one wasn't good because it talked about three different things in the second paragraph. It described each thing all right because it described things in the paragraph.

Score = 3

I think it is pretty good because it shows how progress is taking over and not how it used to be.

The poem was very well written. The sound of the words as well as their meaning help to bring out the mood of the poem.
It was pretty good. It gives you an insight into the sadness. It gives a good impression.

Score = 4

No Samples.

Category V: Perception - Retelling of the poem.

Score = 1 (Inaccurate or incomplete)

It was about a cowboy and they had horses.
Something happened to the lariat and he fell off his horse.
It was about the day the rodeo was closing.
Good-by says the rain on the iron roof.

Score = 2

It says the rodeo ends and the cowboys and the horses ride off on the train. They say good-by to everybody.
It tells about a cowboy and how the rodeo's over and he's getting ready to go back to the west and he's riding off and he's in the rain, I guess, cause it says the rain is coming down and he's listening for all kinds of sounds and I guess the barber poles say good-by - about how they're swirling around and how you can see the red swirling around. They're saying good-by like that.

## Results for 17-Year-Olds

As one can see in Exhibit 5, about half the 17-year-olds' statements were deemed Category I responses. The percentage was much higher for females, however (63%).

Thirty percent of the 17-year-olds made perception statements, many of which were superficial (i.e., "It rhymes," "It describes things that commonly go unnoticed.").

Three of every five teenagers responded with at least one interpretive remark; more than a third of these received adequate or better ratings. The percentages were slightly higher for the

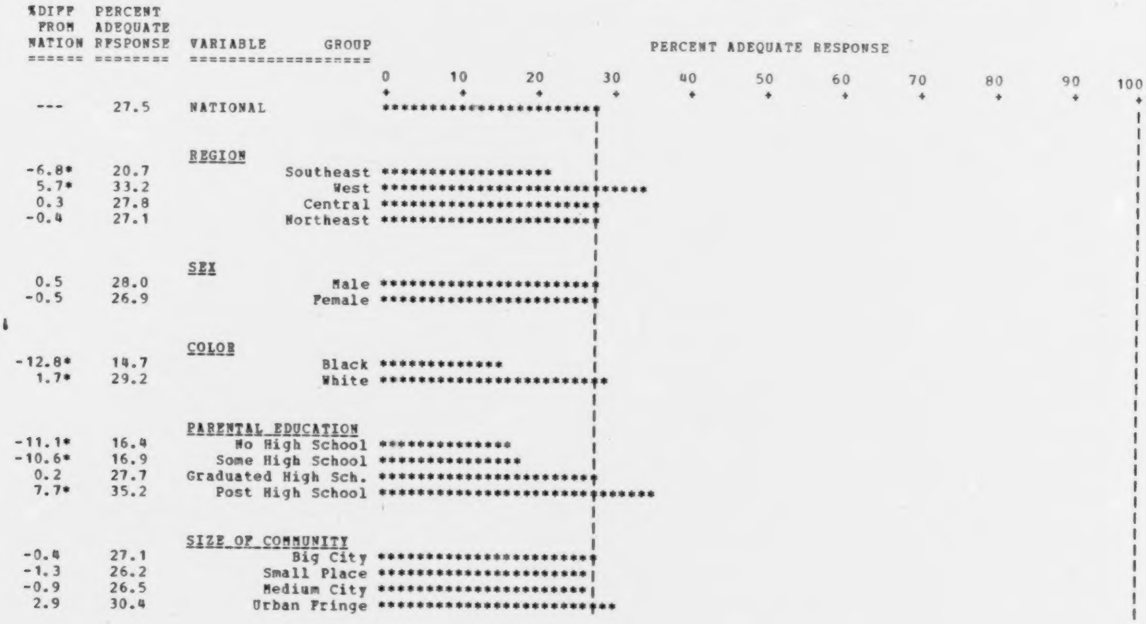
Central region and the post-high-school group (both 67% as opposed to 62% for the nation).

Evaluative statements appeared more frequently among males (51%), Blacks (56%), and people in the no-high-school group (58%), than they did in the nation (47%). As at age 13, most of these responses were inaccurate, vague or too brief.

About one-fourth of the 17-year-olds retold part of the poem while responding to the questions. The proportion was closer to one-third for the Southeast, the Blacks, and the some-high-school group.

Exhibit 7 displays the national and group percentages of 17-year-olds receiving an adequate or superior rating on at least one of their response statements.

Exhibit 7. Percentages of Adequate Responses, Age 17



| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RPSPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 27.5 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -6.8* | 20.7 | | Southeast |
| 5.7* | 33.2 | | West |
| 0.3 | 27.8 | | Central |
| -0.4 | 27.1 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| 0.5 | 28.0 | | Male |
| -0.5 | 26.9 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -12.8* | 14.7 | | Black |
| 1.7* | 29.2 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -11.1* | 16.4 | | No High School |
| -10.6* | 16.9 | | Some High School |
| 0.2 | 27.7 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 7.7* | 35.2 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -0.4 | 27.1 | | Big City |
| -1.3 | 26.2 | | Small Place |
| -0.9 | 26.5 | | Medium City |
| 2.9 | 30.4 | | Urban Fringe |

Several groups posted percentages significantly greater than the national figure of 27.5%. The Western percentage was 33.2, perhaps indicating that familiarity with the poem's subject matter might have encouraged lengthier responses and higher ratings. Whites, as a group, were above the national percentage, and so were the people who comprise the post-high-school parental education group.

Notably lower than national percentages appeared for the Southeast, Blacks, and the two lower parental education groups. Following are some sample responses by 17-year-olds.

## TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO
## "CLOSING OF THE RODEO"
## Age 17

### Answers to Each Question

1.

A. It's a good poem. It tells about how everything is being modernized and all the old things are going and factories are taking over and the pollution.

B. It just tells how the cowboy is going away and leaving. It seems like the factories are coming in.

C. I think it's a pretty good poem. I just like it.

2.

A. I didn't really understand it that much. It looked like it varied. The first stanza is talking about a cowboy and in the next one it was a train and smoke.

B. I noticed it varied. The first stanza where the lariat snaps and the first phrase of the next sounded like it was in two different times.

C. It's good but I can't make too much sense out of it.

3.

A. The general idea I get is that this cowboy is coming from the city and going back out West and I get this impression cause plumes of smoke from the factory sway and the third paragraph says goodbye says the rain on the iron roof and you can find this in city life.

B. It seems like the poem should have started before and it gives an indication that he came from out West and if you look deeply, there is more behind it.

C. I think its pretty good and if you think about it, you can develop ideas from it - why he came and why he is going back.

4.

A. First of all I think it's a poem about a life of the cowboy--he goes to a rodeo--he had what he wanted and participated and now he is going home.

B. I noticed the way it was written. It has some sort of a poetic feeling to it and almost romantic.

C. I think it's a very good poem and it has some sort of a romantic atmosphere. My opinion is it's very nice and it makes a person want to analysis it more and think about it.

5.

A. Well, it paints a picture of a cowboy leaving a town where he's been staying. I think he's known the town for a while cause he was kind of familiar with the rain on the roofs and the barber poles and the different kinds of sounds in the town and the train in the darkness and the smoke from the factories. I think it's what I said a cowboy leaving a small town where he's been staying.

B. About just that it painted a picture. There's a rhyme theme. Like the first and third line of each stanza rhyme.

C. It's a good poem. It's you know, I guess if I hear a poem or if I can see something when I read it or when I hear it, it's got a lot to do with the way it was said on tape. If I can see something and get a picture in my mind then, I think it's a good poem. I think that's what the author - the poet's motive is to make people see what he's talking about.

6.

A. Like in the second paragraph, it doesn't sound like a rodeo. I don't think the second verse fits into the poem at all. It's a pretty good description of a rodeo that's closed.

B. Well, like if I don't know the title, when it says the lariat snaps and the cowboy rolls and mounts and rides away, I'd know it has something to do with the cowboy in the West.

C. It's good. Well, like it describes the cowboy when the whole rodeo was gone, he just had to ride away and start back all over again doing his work again. He has to say goodbye to everything that was there. It will be a couple of years till the next rodeo comes and then he had to miss everything again.

7.

A. It seems to be scattered. Like first it goes to a cowboy and then to the smoke and then it goes to a factory and the smoke from the factory and I can't see how that had to do with the cowboy. I can't see how these three stanzas can parallel with each other. They can't really combine. They're three separate stories it seems like.

B. It's a very odd form. And you can tell by the story the sentences are formed. The first sentence continue onto the next line and in the same stanza one complete line would be a line in a stanza. It's more like a narrative I think. Not really but it's more like a description of a town. I think there's repetition of vowels and a little of alliteration.

C. I'm really not much on poetry. But I really don't like it. I really don't care for it that much. Because it doesn't give me anything specific to think about.

8.

A. It's just talking about the closing of the rodeo, how the cowboy gets ready when he comes in, it seems like he's in civilization for a little while and then he's going back out to where he like it to the plains and then he gets his pack and he mounts up and that and says about the factory and he leaves and all that and the barber poles, he leaves them and he's going out on the prairie.

B. It wasn't written too well. It was real choppy and it didn't -- it went from plumes of smoke from the factory sway in the setting sun and then the curtain falls. It wasn't written very well.

C. I didn't think it was a very good poem. I thought it was a good topic to write on but I didn't think it was a good poem. It didn't sound very well. He didn't use like enough descriptive words. I think plumes of smoke is about the only thing that was really that descriptive. Rain on the iron roofs wasn't really that good. Goodbye says the - this isn't too bad, dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves. The rest of it wasn't too good.

9.

A. I didn't like it. For one thing I don't like cowboys. It sounds like he is a cowboy in modern times. Plumes of smoke from the factory sway. Sounds like he's riding someplace and there is this big factory where everything used to be where he is riding now. I'm not truly sure if that is what it means or if it has another meaning. Goodbye says the rain on the iron roof - this last paragraph is telling it like it used to be. Goodbye says the barber poles and dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves. It is all gone. They left.

B. It seems to me that it had kind of a rhythm pattern to it. That is how I like poems to be. Instead of a set pattern, it should be how the guy likes to write about the poem. Instead of planning everything - just writing it down.

C. I think that it was fairly well written. I think that he thought about what he was saying. The Closing of the Rodeo, I don't really -- maybe it is about a rodeo. Like at the end they say the rain on the iron roofs. Maybe they are packing up all this stuff and taking it up to another town. I don't know, in a way, I didn't really like it that much.

10.

A. I would say that it is a story about a cowboy that has been in the city for some reason. Maybe he had business there. They are closing the rodeo, I guess. They have been there for the rodeo and it seems that they are glad to get away from the city. Like all the smoke in the factories. I think that he would like to be a loner in the prairie away by itself instead of all the noises of the city and things like that.

B. The way they stand out. All the faults of the city symbolizes that he would rather be out on his own. He is leaving the city. That is what stands out to me, is that he doesn't like the city.

C. I kind of like these kind of poems because it symbolizes some of the trouble, the death of the cities and things like that. I can identify this guy that he likes to be out in the open by himself and he wants to get away from the city and stuff.

## Categorized Answers

### Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

I don't like it.
It was sort of boring and didn't hold my attention.
I liked it.
It was interesting.
I think it's terrible. It's very dull and doesn't say anything. It didn't make an impression on me.
This one, it's just not interesting.
I don't get anything out of it.

Score = 2

I didn't like it. I just don't like poems about cowboys.
It really tells about this cowboy and it is for more of a younger person. Adults don't think too much about cowboys anymore.
I don't really like it. Cause it doesn't relate to the people of today.
Like the only thing I can picture is a rodeo.
To me its interesting cause its trying to show how life has changed since cowboy days.
Sad impressions. It just reminds me of somebody very sad and I don't like it that much. I like happiness.
I really don't care for it that much, because it doesn't give me anything specific to think about.
I don't like it too much. It's so simple, I can't read anything into it. I like to read into a poem and interpret it myself.
I don't like it. It's like a kid's poem.

I like it cause it doesn't have any rhyme to it and you can just read it and it is still in poetic form and it doesn't have any tricky words.

Score = 3

It reminds me of more like today and the way things used to be and how they are now.

It just brings back memories of the western movies I have seen.

I could visualize the rest of it. It sounds old like it wasn't written in no time recent -- maybe 50 years ago.

Its not like a lot of the poem I've read cause they have like really deep thought in them and this is like a description and you can picture this in your mind, what they're doing.

I like it because I can understand it. I sort of feel the way he does. I'd rather live in the country than in the city.

Its kind of typical of what's going on today, I guess - ecology, with the factories, and the communes out in California.

It sort of reminds me of the movies on T.V. It is sort of like the cowboy movies. It reminds me of the western movies when they get on the train and say goodbye and they just look at all the things that they left behind.

Score = 3 and 4

I like the cowboy going back, he mounts and rides away. That's putting in a few words about what is happening with everybody today. They aren't accepting what is happening and trying to get back to nature. I think it has a lot of meaning for how short it is. I think it has something to say. It says what I feel also. I think it was a meaning and say what I think -- that this world is being overrun by industry and many people are trying to get back to nature.

Score = 4

It gives me the feeling that I have been at the rodeo and I would hate to see them leaving. I noticed everything that was going on. It gives me feeling. I think it's telling quite a lot and makes me feel that I'm there and a part of it. It makes me feel kind of lonesome and now that he is leaving.

Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1 (Factually incorrect)

Its short.
The first part don't have nothing to do with the second part.
It doesn't go with the title of the poem - The Closing Of The Rodeo.
It's short little sentences about different things.
It got off the subject about three different times.
The rhythm of it.

Score = 2 (Superficial or very brief)

It is like a play. They say that the curtain falls...
It rhymes.
The first and third lines rhyme. The last and third from last rhyme.
The description - dark drum. He could have made it simple and he used unusual things. Like plumes of smoke. Not many people would say plumes of smoke.
It didn't rhyme. It's just kind of like a story - it didn't rhyme.
It ended kind of sudden -- it just dropped off. It rhymed at the end of every other line. It had a certain rhythm to it and then it went along and at the end it just quit.
The author uses a lot of indirect ways of saying things. He doesn't exactly say what you see in this poem.
The way it describes things that commonly go unnoticed and it brings out simple points in strong language.
Must have a lot of symbolism in it.

Score = 3

It's hard to relate some of these stanzas and lines to each other. He uses some of the inanimate objects like the rain and barber poles saying goodbye. I like that cause it kind of symbolizes the death of an era.
The description and the way he used personification of the rain and barber poles saying goodbye and the smoke swaying.
The poem deals mainly with the senses -- hearing and seeing. The lines don't stop at the end of the line and it's in iambic pentameter. The first two are mainly description. There is a pattern in the last stanza where it says goodbye. It's a refrain setting in the reader's mind.
I believe this author likes to use a lot of things to represent people like the sun in comparison with the cowboy. Instead of saying the city, he says the smoke

from the factories. And the train pulling away instead of saying the cowboy is leaving.

It has good techniques the way they use words and sounds and symbolism, like the curtain falls. Well it had an even rhythm.

The poem was probably written by a lover of the western life and was using personification by saying goodbye say the rain on the iron roofs and goodbye say the barber poles to point out the excitement and sadness of leaving.

It seems to be using imagination. It is describing the dark coming and the sun setting and it describes meaning things in different ways. It gives things human characteristics as talking in the last stanza. It seems to depict things that are human characteristics and they are talking in the last stanza. It seems to depict what happens really.

Score = 4

There's only three verses that it has. It wasn't direct in saying some things. Like it kinds used imaginary things. That the cowboy was going away from the rodeo. It brought in lots of other things. It played on our senses. For example, plumes of smoke from the factory sway in the setting sun. Well, that was the sense of sight. And then, goodbye says the rain on the iron roofs. That was like hearing, and then also dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves - that was also hearing. Mainly on sight and hearing it was based on, I think. Well, if I had a choice between this poem and "I've Never Seen The Tree", I think I'd read this one because "The Tree" has a basic rhythm and this one kept my interest up, there wasn't any pattern to it.

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

Doesn't make too much sense to me - looks like it is trying to get an idea across.

It didn't have any meaning in it to me.

It probably has underlying meanings in it.

I just don't understand it.

Well, about the rain on the roof, it was some meaning there or other that I didn't get.

I understand it in a way, I guess.

It didn't really make too much sense. I got the meaning of it, but to others I figured it wouldn't make too much sense.

It's easy to understand. It doesn't use very hard words.

Score = 2

The cowboy went down south and the train come in. It's talking about horses and something about pollution.

It seems like he is riding away from his problems or something.

It's like a desert. The poem to me -- it seems that a person is riding around in the desert and the sun is hot and darkness is following him.

I think it was about a man trying to get away from the city. He didn't like it.

It's talking about the rain and it's quit raining and they are having a rodeo.

It's about the cowboy. When they say plumes of smoke that means they have factories and where he used to roam, they have built a factory.

I think the cowboy was looking for someplace to go.

To me it sounds like somebody that is away from his hometown and he's going back.

I think it's talking about the cowboy and seems to be looking for a horse or something and he lassoed it and it got away from him and he is out by himself.

Score = 3

That it was the ending of the west. He was in a different age and he was looking back at it. He says goodbye and the curtain falls and the end.

I don't know. I think that it concerns the old life with the new life. They show the cowboy taking off from the rodeo and he is getting ready for the lonely life of traveling around.

It is a social comment poem like the closing down of something old and making room for progress. Does it have anything do with that? It's sort of a comparison of cowboys, you know you think of the costumes and a rodeo is sort of an old fashioned thing and then they compare it with the factory in the distance and the closing down is sort of making room for something new.

Well, all I can say from the poem is that it's like he's going somewhere and he's looking back into the past. It's like he's leaving a town and he's going out into the country. That he was leaving a certain place and going to see the world maybe.

It's about a cowboy that is leaving where he has lived all his life and he's riding a horse and knows how to ride and he seems to be leaving everything behind cause he says all his goodbyes.

It's sort of short and it seems like everyone feels sorry for the cowboy. They are sort of sad to see him go.

Cause the cowboys are hardly ever seen anymore and they have gone extinct to some extent.

It's interesting. The cowboy comes into society and sees that it is too complex and it's not for him. It kind of shows the simple things as they were disappearing and fading into the past.

I think the title The Closing of the Rodeo means it is done with and past and the whole poem is about when the cowboy is leaving and trying to come back and modernization with factories and railroads have come in.

I think it's talking about the cowboy out in the country and the air is clean and not polluted by men and then he goes back to the city and he sees the smoke from the factories and trains and things like that and he gets back into civilization and then he sees what a mess man has made of the world.

Score = 3 and 4

I think the poem is fairly clear in its meaning and seems to portray the cowboy and it's time for him to go back to the land where the cowboy goes. It kind of portrays that he's glad to get back. I get the impression he hasn't won anything and it has kind of a morose meaning. He's leaving and he's not very happy and he is going back to where everything is wild and free. I also noticed that it had a somber mood.

Score = 4

It says the closing of the rodeo but I think the author is thinking back when cowboys were king and tells kind of how he wishes he could be back there cause of the last verse, goodbye says the rain and goodbye says the barber poles. Things are now complicated and it was better when things were free where the cowboy could just get up and ride away from everything.

Well, it's about this cowboy and it's about how the rodeo is vanishing from the American scene and also how factories and everything is taking over and the day of the cowboy is at an end.

Well, it seems like it's showing what happened after the closing of the rodeo and just what the cowboy does and prepares for the journey back home and it's describing the different towns and things that play such an important part in his going away.

The first part that I noticed was the part about his rolling up -- rolling up his pack and putting it on his horse. It seems like he was preparing for a journey along ways away and the plumes of smoke, he's looking back at the city and saying well I won't be seeing this any more and the rain on the roof seems to be telling him goodbye and he's looking at the barber pole and it seems as though he was saying, well, I won't see this again.

I think that the rodeo signifies a source of pleasure and relaxation for the cowboy and when it's over he packs everything up and goes back to work - his old simple life. It's the end when the curtain falls and the sun is setting and time to go back home.

Well, I think the poem tells the real story of what's happening now days. It's telling how today's factories and an increasing knowledge by man is taking over the U.S. and the old ways of life are vanishing and the new ways are taking over.

As I interpreted the poem, it's making a statement on the closing of an era - The West. It uses the cowboy as an allegory of the old west and the imagery in the poem is the cowboy as he stand in contrast to the smoke of the factories and the train which all signal progress. I believe the noticeable things about the poem was the style. I think it signals something of a contrast or it tries to play out the contrast by using the cowboy and the old west and progress has come and he no longer has a place in society.

Score = 4

It seems to be more or less about the death of the cowboy era where it says plumes of smoke from the factory sway in the setting sun. He sees this as he looks back. Then as he is leaving through town, the rain on the iron roof seems to be saying goodbye. Goodbye say the barber poles, he is going back to where the cowboy's life is out on the range away from the cities. Mr. Smith says the industry and the city are pushing the cowboy out of American life and he has no place to go anymore except to ride off into the sunset.

I think that this poem signifies the end of the rodeo and the old western culture of the cowboy. At the end is just like the cowboy rides off into the sunset and that is the end of the story. It is like modern civilization is taking over and that is the end of the story.

It seems like it's trying to tell about a rodeo in the old times shutting down for good -- vanishing out of history. The ending gives you the impression that like the barber poles and stuff are vanishing. It's just telling something dying out.

Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It's pretty good, I think.
It's a nice poem.
I thought it was very good.
I guess it's a fair poem.
It's ok.
It's all right.
I would say that it is just a good descriptive poem.
I think it's lousy.
It's not a bad poem.

Score = 2

It's nicely composed, I think. You know the author seems to have a nice view of what's going on in this country, you know, like what the cowboy is.
It's pretty good in the first two parts but the end signifies that everything went back the way they were.
I thought it was kind of nice the way they described it. The lariat and the way the cowboy left in the setting sun and the smoke and the train that pulled away in the darkness.
It's a good poem. It tells good points about the cowboy.
It sounds pretty good - the rhythm and the way the words rhyme.
I guess it's pretty good. It could have been a little longer and told a little bit more.
I thought it was pretty good cause it shows some truth in it.

Score = 3

It just impressed me as a real good poem of the differences in time lapsed. I think it has real good quality. It relates to the changing of time of how it was then and now.

Score = 4

No Samples.

Category V: Perception - Retelling of the poem.

Score = 1 (Inaccurate or incomplete)

It is about how the cowboy starts out and then he goes away and then he is gone and then he gets tired.

This guy is leaving the rodeo and he is saying goodbye mostly to the things around him -- the iron roofs and the rain.

It's mostly just a description of a guy leaving.

It's about a cowboy.

The life of a cowboy and how he feels the picture of it.

It was just the cowboy and the rodeo and it's over and he rides off.

It tells a little story in the poem about the cowboy rides away.

It's the closing of the rodeo and what the cowboy is doing.

It talks about the factory and the cowboy and near the factory.

I noticed about the cowboy and he fell off this horse.

It says goodbye says the barber poles and goodbye says the rain on the iron roofs.

It was talking about the closing of the rodeo. The lariat snaps and the cowboy rolls his pack and mounts and rides away. Back to the land the cowboy goes. Plumes of smoke the factory sway in the setting sun. The curtain falls in the setting sun. A train in the darkness pulls away. Goodbye says the rain on the iron roof. Goodbye says the barber poles. Dark drum and vanishing horses' hooves. It was William J. Smith.

Score = 2

It's about the rodeo closing down and the cowboy is going back to where he came from. The sun is setting and it tells about the train pulling away.

It just tells about a cowboy who snaps lariat and rolls up his pack and rides away and the smoke from the factories and the setting sun and the rain on the iron roofs and the vanishing horses' hooves and the barber poles.

It's the closing of the rodeo and it's about the cowboys riding off home. They have their packs rolled up, they mount and ride away. The cowboys go back to the prairies. It says about the factories and the smoke and the sun setting about the falls. The darkness of the trains. It says about the goodbyes and it's about the rain and goodbye says the barber poles and dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves. It talks about rodeos. Like after the rodeos over and the cowboys going home.

Just what the title is "Closing of the Rodeo" the rodeo is packing up and moving away and darkness is starting to fall and that has something to do with the closing of the rodeo. The plumes of smoke and the curtain falls and the train in the darkness pulls away.

It just describes the cowboy and the rodeo is over and he probably leaves and where he's going to and how the city looks as he leaves.

It talks about the end of the rodeo and moving out to another city or going out to the land again. The first stanza is about the rodeo and the second is the rodeo ending and the third is when they are on the train and moving out.

The poem says a guy - a cowboy just finishing a rodeo and he's going away or something. It explains how the cowboy goes back to his own land and how they tend to leave off from the setting. The last part - the dark drum of the vanishing horses' hooves. It says that it's ending and starting to close. In the last part you really know what they are talking abou. Also the title gives you an idea of what the poem is really talking about. The cowboy mounts and rides away and the train in the darkness pulls away. And the dark drum.

## Results for Adults

Slightly less than half of the adults responded to the poem with at least one engagement-involvement statement. About 4% o these statements received superior ratings and about 13% were adequate.

Twenty-eight percent of the adults made perception responses nationally, but for the post-high-school parental education group, the figure was 34%.

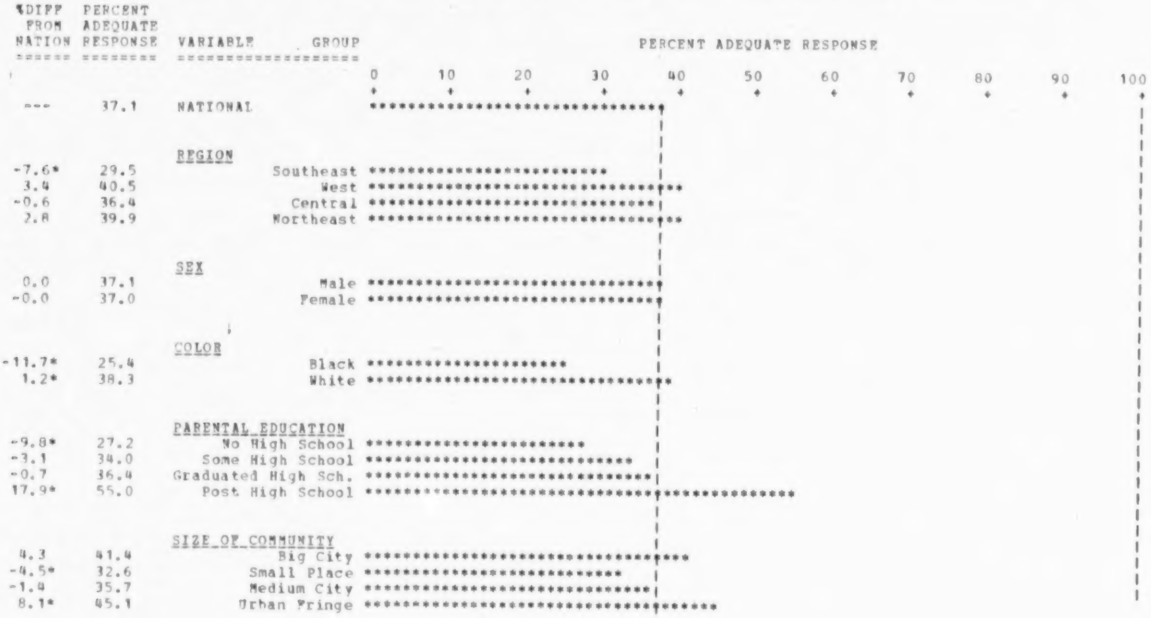
Almost two-thirds of the adults made interpretive observations, half of which received ratings of 3 or 4. The West and the post-high-school group both posted higher percentages than he nation in this category: 72% and 74%, respectively. The latte group also had a higher than national percentage of superior interpretive responses (twice the national figure, in fact), as did the males.

Thirty-seven percent of the adults made evaluative comment about this poem nationally, but for the Southeastern group the figure was 46%. As at the other ages, most of these statements received low ratings.

Three adults in 10 retold part of the poem in their respone to the question.

Exhibit 8 displays the national and group percentages of adults who received ratings of 3 or 4 on at least one of their statements about the poem.

Exhibit 8. Percentages of Adequate Responses, Adults



| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 37.1 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -7.6* | 29.5 | | Southeast |
| 3.4 | 40.5 | | West |
| -0.6 | 36.4 | | Central |
| 2.8 | 39.9 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| 0.0 | 37.1 | | Male |
| -0.0 | 37.0 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -11.7* | 25.4 | | Black |
| 1.2* | 38.3 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -9.8* | 27.2 | | No High School |
| -3.1 | 34.0 | | Some High School |
| -0.7 | 36.4 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 17.9* | 55.0 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE OF COMMUNITY | |
| 4.3 | 41.4 | | Big City |
| -4.5* | 32.6 | | Small Place |
| -1.4 | 35.7 | | Medium City |
| 8.1* | 45.1 | | Urban Fringe |

Four groups performed below the national level of 37%. The Southeast percentage was 29.5%, the Black percentage was 25.4%, the no high school figure was 27.2%, and the small-city group's percentage was 32.6%.

Whites, as a group, registered a slight but significant advantage over the national figure. The big-city-fringe DOC group percentage was eight points above the nation's. But the greatest positive effect occurred in the post-high-school parental education group: 55% of the adults in that category received adequate or better scores on their responses.

## TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO
## "CLOSING OF THE RODEO"
## Adult

Answers to Each Question

1.

A. It's just a poem is all I can tell you.

B. It's well, not much of anything, it's just a poem. That's the way it goes though, talking about the rodeo and all. The cowboys they come in from way off and when the rodeo is gone they load up the horses in the trucks and they pull out to another big place. I guess that's about all.

C. I'm not much on poems so I better not say what I think about it cause that old computer up there might blow up.

2.

A. Apparently this poem is concerned with the ending of a rodeo and in the poem the cowboy is going back to the country from which he came. That is the apparent thing of the poem but a more deeply underlined theme of the poem is the sense of loss that the poet is trying to convey by the fact that the cowboy has had his moment as it were in the sun and heading back in the darkness quite literally as the train in the darkness pulls away. He's had the glory of the rodeo with everybody watching him and admiring his skill, this lariat and one thing or another is going back to the hum-drum existence on the ranch.

B. One notices the very sharp imagery by the poet used in the poem. The poet starts the poem with the lariat snaps and is a very sharp image of what is going on. One thing that is particularly noticeable in this is the contrast between light and dark in the poem which the poet sets up and it runs progressively through the poem. The first verse takes place obviously in light at the rodeo and then in the second verse we move into smoke which might be said to be semi-darkness and then finally in the second verse we have a concrete darkness, "a train in the darkness pulls away" and then finally in the last verse we move from a concrete darkness to an abstract darkness with "Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves," this is not supposed to represent actual vanishing horses' hooves.

C. One of the most interesting things about this poem to me is the dichotomy that is usually set up between the evil, bad city and the beautiful ideally country side is reversed at least by implication the country side or possibly the cowboy's job is seen as dull and hum-drum whereas the city is seen as a place of excitement and light and a place where it's possible to achieve glory. I like this poem. I think the poet accomplishes concisely and well what he sets out to do. The only possible objection that I have is the last line "Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves" which at the one time seems to be a bit melodramatic for the sense of - whereas the theme is dramatic, the poet I do not think the poet set out to create a dramatic atmosphere throughout the poem rather it's a more mournful sense of loss and the melodramatic last line does not accomplish this and aside from that it's very hard to have vanishing horses which is sort of a secondary situation but which I think is important. "Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves" at least what I question is whether it is out of context with the rest of the poem which follows sort of Elliot-like realism with vivid images towing to real life, the lariat snaps, the curtain falls, rain on the iron roofs and then suddenly we have all these vanishing horses.

## Categorized Answers

Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

I like it.
The poem itself didn't interest me that much.

It didn't impress me.
I enjoyed it - it's pleasant.
I don't care for it.

Score = 2

It seems like the Lone Ranger after he has killed the robber.
It's nice to think that there are still a few cowboys.
I think it's interesting cause I like cowboys and westerns.
It tells how things were a long time ago and how it keeps getting better and better the way I see it.
I like horses and cowboys.
I think this poem is very good for people who does not know the life in the country.

Score = 3

I think it's something everybody would enjoy. It tells about something that everybody can identify with, something that they have seen before or something that they have experienced before.

The poem reminds me of the close of day when everyone is getting off work and it's time to go to bed. It gives you an idea about what's happening in the evening or darkness.

Well, you never end a rodeo with a lariat snap of the cowboy. That sounds crazy, being I'm half-way cowboy that's one thing I would notice. "The lariat snaps, the cowboy rolls his pack and mount and rides away." That's not how a rodeo ends. It always ends by the last event of steer roping or bare-back riding or something of this nature. That might be stupid but that's what I noticed about it.

I liked it. Specifically, I can't say, it makes you sort of identify with the cowboy a little bit, like you might think you would like to be in his shoes to be able to leave the city and be able to go back out to where you like to live best.

Score = 4

I think it's a pretty poem and it puts me in the mind of sort like - I've never been to a rodeo - but it's sort of like a state fair closing and the crowd is going away and the people getting in their means of transportation such as in the poem is a train. This rodeo puts me in the mind of like it was in a small town because the people or passengers on the train are looking on the barber poles as they go back and then you hear the cowboys that was taking part in the rodeo, the hooves of their horses you can hear vanishing away as they go off.

It has kind of an old-fashion sentiment as far as the rodeo goes, it's like a competitive sport. The cowboy rolls his pack and mounts and rides away, like the days gone by. This isn't like today's world. This is all nice, fantasy type, this is not real, not logical, not reality for today's world. "Goodbye says the barber poles," this is kind of ridiculous, ever seen a barber pole say goodbye or wave or anything else? Thirty-bucks and fun, you know, we've made it all a bed of roses and it wasn't - the guy broke his back to earn his money, it was damn hard work but everybody like - they made Buffalo Bill a hero - and what did he do - him and the other buffalo hunters killed off all the buffalo. Like I say for a fantasy type of thing, it's fine but it doesn't apply to anything in today's life.

I think that the poem expresses something that all of us go through which is switching from one life to another. We all have different roles in life and we have more than one role in life whether it be like myself where I switch from the working day back to being a mother and a wife or whether it's here like with the cowboy is at the rodeo which I'm sure is very exciting to him and different but then it came to an end like the end of a day and he goes back to the life of a cowboy which I'm sure neither one is unpleasant to him just as my two roles of life, they're just different and separate.

*It's just like you are excited about a holiday coming up or something that you're going to do. Maybe you're going to a party or something. The next day you fall into a depression because you have nothing more to do but continue on your own routine in life. It's telling about routine life. I think that's another meaning the author was trying to point out - was trying to "hide." (WHAT ABOUT THIS HIDDEN MEANING? EXPLAIN YOURSELF.) He's not only talking about a rodeo, he could be talking about anything else. He could be talking about your grandmother coming to visit you for a few days or a week. It's just hustle-bustle while you're getting ready for it and she's here. When she's here you enjoy her. And when she leaves, it's a depression, you don't feel as good as you did when she was here.

*NOTE: 17-year-old out-of-school response.

Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1 (Factually incorrect)

It's short and to the point.

It didn't rhyme.

It doesn't seem to all go together.

Just that it doesn't tie together. Except for the first verse of the poem, it doesn't go along with the title at all.

The second segment down didn't seem to be like the first part of it.

The poem in itself the way I read it is not arranged correctly. The second verse should be first. The third verse might even go second.

Score = 2 (Superficial or very brief)

It describes it very well, real easy to see what's happening in just a few words.

It seems to jump from situation to situation. It seems inconsistent. It's rhythmic.

It rhymes.

It's short and it has a definite rhythm to it.

It was very descriptive. The author seems to in a short and blunt way seems to describe things in details even though his thoughts aren't - they don't coincide but they do whatever he happens to describe in each little paragraph seems to be vivid. It's short and I like short poems.

Score = 3

First thing I noticed is the rhyming scheme, the first and the last lines of all three verses rhyme so it had the rhyming scheme of A-B-A. The fact that it has the rhyme in it.

It's the end of the day and all the symbolism seems to be darkness, the sun's going down and the rain's coming, goodbye, sadness runs through it all.

Probably the thing I noticed most was the way the final stanza contains the vanishing rhythm of goodbye, it's repeated again and again so that you actually get a sense of the vanishing horses' hooves. The sounds that are produced, those of someone riding off in a distance which also with the image of departing the train pulling away, smoke vanishing, things of this sort.

It uses some interesting symbols such as rain on the iron roofs I thought was very good use of words. I thought it was a very good poem, expresses quite a lot in just three stanzas. Also things like the setting sun I feel possibly a little trite and also the curtain falls but goodbye says the rain on the roofs and goodbye says the barber poles, etc. was a little interesting. I was trying to think, I forget what that's called having an inanimate object speaking, the literary term for it is bothering me.

Score = 4

That it parallels the same idea in different context. The beginning is simple and the second part moves the context into a more visual idea and then in the last stanza, there's a visual and in terms of sound in the end. I don't think it's a very expansive or very developed idea except the illusions and the images are interesting as they interact in the different stanzas.

One notices the very sharp imagery by the poet used in the poem. The poet starts the poem with the lariat snaps and is a very sharp image of what is going on. One thing that is particularly noticeable in this is the contrast between light and dark in the poem which the poet sets up and it runs progressively through the poem. The first verse takes place obviously in light at the rodeo and then in the second verse we move into smoke which might be said to be semi-darkness and then finally in the second verse we have a concrete darkness, "a train in the darkness pulls away" and then finally in the last verse we move from a concrete darkness to an abstract darkness with "Dark drum the vanishing horses' hooves," this is not supposed to represent actual vanishing horses' hooves.

The poem makes particular use of figures of speech particularly personification in having the barber poles and the rain on the roof speak and also the metaphor of having the curtain falling about the night and smoke swaying is primarily the way the poem is structured. That's the point I particularly noticed the figure of speech. It's - should we say - give a good word picture and once again through the use of the figures of speech.

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

I really don't understand it, tell you the truth about it. It doesn't make any sense.

I don't get much out of it.
It's not so easy to understand.
I don't know what it's trying to explain.

Score = 2

One thing that bothered me was that I didn't know whether they were riding on the horses or going on a train by the way it's phrased here. I assumed they are riding on their horses but I wasn't clear about what the train pulling away had to do with it...I suppose I should interpret this on a bigger scale but I'm not sure what the poet means by writing this.

It indicates to me that a man is leaving and it seems in the poem the things he remembers as he leaves.

The only thing I would like to say is the way it shows that something is ending and it's going back to the true life of it.

Only thing I can see is what they were trying to get across is that maybe we're better off with horses than with cars. That it was talking about polluting the air, right?

It's kind of sad and nostalgic.

Score = 3

Just that it shows how sad a rodeo rider can be and how they are in their moment of glory and it's all gone when the day is ended.

It's the end of a long day. It brings back memories and sadness. He's finished and tired and he's going home.

There are cowboys today but they are fading away and the factory smoke is coming in everywhere. It's sad.

The cowboy is just bidding farewell or goodbye to the kind of life that he knew.

Score = 4

It tells about the cowboy, his life style, and that it's coming to an end. The author hates to see the old times and the good old days come to an end.

It shows that the world is becoming industralized and things aren't the way they used to be. The cowboy thing is kind of out-dated and going. It shows the changing of time, certain things that are just sort of passing into history. You don't see barber poles anymore.

It's a typical ending like a movie or just another day, this one is basically about the ending of a rodeo. The cowboys going off in the modern way, on the train, closing up the shop like the circus used to be. At the end it says goodbye and implies that the rodeo is closing up like the circus used to going from town to town and it is slowly dying, the cowboy himself is slowly dying or being taken over by other means and modes of transportation. He is slowly fading off into the sunset in his own way. The western cowboy that most of us know about are not the ones that exists any more, they're being overtaken by co-operate ranges and large industrial complex are taking their place. The cowboys are very slowly fading away. It seems to be a fairly modern poem, the times seems to be in the century of a group of people that are slowly dying out.

It was rather sad because the cowboy came and did his job at the rodeo and back to the old land. It looks like the cowboy is sort of misfit in the city now where he used to be at home and ride the range and that was his home and now he's a stranger there, he just come to perform and then leaves. The smoke from the factory is still there, the rain on the iron roofs are there, the barber poles are there, signs of civilization sort of destroyed the feeling of the cowboy. Just that it was a rather melancholy poem.

It seems to me the poem is about a cowboy who is part of a rodeo and who has gone back to where he originally lived. It describes exactly what it feels like to leave. There is a certain amount of melancholy in the poem, it was sort of sad and dark and sad like maybe he won't be coming back anymore because it's all full of civilization. I noticed most of all the feeling of formality that he's leaving and he doesn't seem to be coming back, everything seems to be closing and the curtain's falling down and a lot of goodbyes and the vanishing of the horses' hooves like they may not ever be seen again because it's the end of an era rather than just a rodeo that happens to be stopping.

I think it's a very short poem and it basically describes the closing down of a rodeo and most of the text leaves me with a feeling that something is obviously over with from the standpoint of the cowboy moving out, the smoke from the factory is moving off into the setting sun, the curtain falling, the train pulling out...it basically leaves me with the feeling that something is leaving, something is really over with. The thing that I noticed most is all these comparisons that relates to the closing of the rodeo, the fact that the smoke is going into the setting sun, the cowboy is moving out, the train is moving out, the rain is saying goodbye and everything indicates that something is obviously over with.

I personally like it and I think it's kind of a sentimental kind of a poem because it tells how you have memories of things in the beginning and how they disintegrate toward the end. Just like the rise and fall of a day, the cowboy and all his good times and all his prize money he's won and all of a sudden it's over with and he's going home. Then about the factory and all the hustle and bustle of the first days of work and your lunches and the different people you've seen during the day and the whistle blows and it's time for everybody to go home. The same thing with the rain and then the barber poles and I think, too, it has a connotation of things that just have been bygones, things that have passed and becoming a thing of the past for us.

Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It was written pretty good.
It's a nice poem.
I think it had a good way of telling or expressing something.
It's fair.
I just don't think it's too much of a poem.

Score = 2

It's not much of a poem - it didn't rhyme.
I think it's a very good poem in the way it rhymes and you could understand what they were talking about.
It's good, it gives you a good idea of what someone would be thinking about.
I would say it's a fair poem, it's difficult to read. I wouldn't say it's a good poem, it's the type of poem that you might see in a monthly magazine just as an insert.
It's nice, you can read it several times and get a different meaning each time.

Score = 3

I think the poem is real good - it expounds the real feeling that these people go through when a rodeo ends.

Score = 3-4

The reason I think it's a good poem is that it conveys both the reality of the finishing of the rodeo and also the sadness of it in that the cowboy has to return to his routine work just as we all must do at the end of a given celebration or event.

Score = 4

I think it's a nice little vignette. It kind of crystalizes a little scene and specifically a moment in time in this town where the rodeo is.

Category V: Retelling of the poem.

Score = 1 (Inaccurate or incomplete)

It's just a poem about the Closing of the Rodeo. It says goodbye and closes the rodeo more or less.

About the lariat snaps of the cowboy and he rolls his pack, and the curtain falls and the trains and how they say goodbye to the roofs and to the poles and the horse.

It's just a poem about a cowboy leaving a rodeo and going back home.

It's about a cowboy and he's in a rodeo. It says how he gets on his horse and rides away.

It's about a rodeo.

Score = 2

Well, the cowboy is riding away on his horse and then some gets on a train and rides into the darkness of a smoking setting sun and at the same time it seems to be raining at the scene which he's left. It has a good background on what the cowboy is doing as he's leaving.

The whole poem is just the Closing of the Rodeo and it tells about-to me-gives three different parts to it. First tells about the cowboy and then it tells about the factory and the sun setting and the third's about the cowboy and about the atmosphere and the closing is about everything is moving away I guess.

It's just very clear that the cowboy leaves and go. Well, the cowboy packs his bag - rolls his pack it says here and rides away. They tell about the smoke from the factory in the setting sun. It's raining. It tells about the rain on the iron roofs. Goodbye to the barber poles.

The rodeo is over and the cowboy gets ready to leave, puts his pack on his horse and rides away. He could see the smoke from the factory as he was riding away and he could see a train pull away as he rode away. Well, he was more or less saying goodbye to the town he had the rodeo in and he's leaving to go someplace else.

Score = 3

> No, I don't have anything to say, really there's not that much to say, I just don't know.
>
> I ain't got nothing to say about it, the first part, this one up here.
>
> No, I can't tell you nothing about it. It's kind of hard to decide on here. I guess you think I'm a hard one to try to decide something, ain't I. I just don't know too much about explaining nothing that's my problem. I just don't know.
>
> There's nothing I want to say about it, no. I don't know what there is you are supposed to notice about it except that it's a poem. It's just a poem that's all.

## Age Comparisons

The percentages of responses in Categories I and II were about the same at all three age levels. However, there was a considerable increase in interpretive statements between age 13 and the two older ages. Categories IV and V, on the other hand, were less popular at the two older ages than at age 13.

Exhibits 6, 7, and 8 establish a very definite increase in quality of response from age 13 to age 17 to the adult level. They also reveal that the same groups perform above and below the national level at all three ages.

## Exercise R204

Ages 9, 13
Objective: II

Instructions to exercise administrators:

Before beginning this exercise say to the student,

> "For this exercise and the next one we thought it would be easier to tape record what you say than for me to write your answers. In a few minutes I am going to tape record everything we say, so please speak in a loud clear voice."

Let the student become familiar with the tape recorder before continuing. Then hand the student a copy of the poem "Space Travellers" and say,

> "Now I am going to play a tape on which you will hear this poem being read. Read the poem to yourself as it is being read to you. When you have finished reading the poem, I will ask you some questions about it. If there are any words in the poem which you do not understand, ask me about them when you have finished reading the poem along with the tape and I will explain them to you. Please don't ask any questions while the poem is being read."

Turn on the tape recorder. When the poem has been read, say to the student,

> "Now do you have any questions?"

When the student is ready, be sure the recorder containing the prepared tape is turned off. Place the microphone of the second recorder only a foot or two from the student's mouth, being certain that he speaks directly into it.

Give the student sufficient time to answer questions A, B, and C as fully as he wants. He may have the text with him. You may add, "Anything else?"

to each of these questions or

"Could you say more about that?"

or a similar probing question. Do not, however, direct the subject through questions. For example, do not ask questions such as "What is the lesson in the poem?" or "How does that affec the story?"

A. Tell me what you most want to say about the poem.

B. What did you especially notice in the poem?

C. Tell me what you think about the poem.

SPACE TRAVELLERS*

There was a witch, hump-backed and hooded,

material deleted due to
copyright restrictions

Riding the silence to the moon and back.

---

*"Space Travellers," by James N. Birtton. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Exhibit 9. Percentages of Statements in Each Category; Ratings Within Categories

| Age | % in Category | Rating 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Engagement-Involvement** | | | | | |
| 9 | 69.4% | 24.1% | 40.0% | 5.0% | 0.4% |
| 13 | 66.0 | 20.5 | 39.4 | 5.9 | 0.1 |
| **Perception-Analysis** | | | | | |
| 9 | 16.9 | 3.3 | 13.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 13 | 31.7 | 3.4 | 26.9 | 1.4 | 0.[illegible] |
| **Interpretation** | | | | | |
| 9 | 8.4 | 1.3 | 6.6 | .4 | 0.1 |
| 13 | 31.8 | 7.7 | 15.9 | 7.4 | .8 |
| **Evaluation** | | | | | |
| 9 | 62.2 | 56.1 | 6.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| 13 | 53.0 | 45.8 | 7.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 |
| **Retelling** | | | | | |
| 9 | 49.6 | 41.3 | 5.8 | 2.5 | 0.0 |
| 13 | 43.5 | 37.2 | 5.8 | .5 | 0.0 |

Responses to this poem were mixed. People either liked and understood it or found it baffling--there did not seem to be any middle ground.

## Results for 9-Year-Olds

Two of every three 9-year-olds responded to this poem with at least one statement of a personal nature. Only 5% of them, however, received adequate scores. Groups which showed significantly higher than national percentages in Category I were the Central region, the Whites, the post-high-school group and the affluent-suburb STOC group.

Nationally, 17% of the responses fall into the perception category, but for the post-high-school group, the percentage was 22%. Most of the comments dealt with the apparent lack of rhyme in the poem and with the differing line lengths. However, few of them received adequate scores.

Nine percent of the responses were interpretive--that includes both successful and unsuccessful attempts to articulate meanings in the poem. The percentages were higher for the post-high-school parental education group (12%) and the affluent-suburb group (15%), but--regardless of group--very few statements received ratings of 3 or 4.

Three of every five students made at least one evaluative statement, but most of these were very short and unsupported by criteria. By far the largest group representations in this category were the 69% registered by the Northeast and the 76% registered by the affluent-suburb STOC category.

Half of the 9-year-olds literally retold parts of the poem in the course of responding to it. The Southeast, no-high-school, and rural groups had higher percentages in this category than the nation did. Four-fifths of the retelling responses were considered inadequate, however.

Exhibit 10 presents the national and group percentages of 9-year-olds who received adequate or better scores on any statement made in response to the poem.

Though the national percentage of adequate or better responses was very low, there were significant variations. The figures for both the Northeast and the post-high-school group, for instance, were 9%, while the percentage for the West was only 3.6%. There were no significant effects for the sex, color and STOC variable categories.

## Exhibit 10. Percentages of Adequate Responses, Age 9

```
%DIFF     PERCENT
 FROM     ADEQUATE
NATION    RESPONSE  VARIABLE       GROUP                   PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE
======    ========  ===================
                                      0       10      20      30      40      50      60      70      80      90      100
                                      +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +
   ---    5.9    NATIONAL             *****|                                                                          |
                                           |                                                                          |
                 REGION                    |                                                                          |
  -1.8    4.0               Southeast **** |                                                                          |
  -2.3*   3.6                    West **** |                                                                          |
   0.3    6.2                 Central *****|                                                                          |
   3.1*   9.0               Northeast *****|**                                                                        |
                                           |                                                                          |
                 SEX                       |                                                                          |
  -0.1    5.8                    Male *****|                                                                          |
   0.1    6.0                  Female *****|                                                                          |
                                           |                                                                          |
                 COLOR                     |                                                                          |
   0.2    6.1                   Black *****|                                                                          |
   0.1    6.0                   White *****|                                                                          |
                                           |                                                                          |
                 PARENTAL EDUCATION        |                                                                          |
  -1.6    4.3          No High School **** |                                                                          |
  -0.1    5.8        Some High School *****|                                                                          |
  -0.4    5.5    Graduated High Sch. *****|                                                                          |
   2.8*   8.6        Post High School *****|**                                                                        |
                                           |                                                                          |
                 SIZE-AND-TYPE             |                                                                          |
                 OF COMMUNITY              |                                                                          |
   0.6    6.5     Extreme Inner City *****|                                                                          |
  -1.6    4.3          Extreme Rural **** |                                                                          |
   0.4    6.3             Small City *****|                                                                          |
  -2.4    3.5            Medium City **** |                                                                          |
  -0.6    5.3       Rest Of Big City *****|                                                                          |
   1.1    6.9        Suburban Fringe *****|*                                                                         |
   3.2    9.1     Extreme Aff Suburb *****|**                                                                        |
```

Following are some sample responses.

### TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO
### "SPACE TRAVELERS"
### Age 9

## Answers to Each Question

1.

A. It was an interesting poem.

B. The witch.

C. It was very interesting.

2.

A. It was good.

B. There was a witch. She was flying.

C. It was a fairy tale poem.

3.

A. It's about a witch she lives in a burnt out tree - she rode the wind and rode the night and she rode the tempest to the moon and back. She rode dark and she rode cold and she riding to the silent to the moon and back.

B. Well, well, it's a tall tale cause it isn't true and a couple of things in here wouldn't be true like for instance, I could take a burnt out tree if you had a burnt out tree you wouldn't be able to live in it cause if its burnt out it would just fall down so all burnt out. And you can't put a rocket in the sea and there's no such thing as a telephone ear.

C. I think it's nice and it's a nice poem and it's about a witch and she rode to the moon and she sent a rocket from the sea and lived in a burnt out tree.

4.

A. It was a very nice poem and I like it and it was interesting. WHAT WAS INTERESTING ABOUT IT? About the man who had a telephone on his ear and he was riding in the tempest to the moon and back. And that it was a nice poem and it had a nice title and it had a lot of characters in it.

B. That they - the words are not together. Like the word right here isn't together with that. YOU MEAN KIND OF LIKE THE RHYMING. Yes. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. YOU MEAN THE LINES ARE NOT EVEN? No this right here, this paragraph not with this and all of it start with capital letters.

C. I think it was nice and I would like to have a copy of it and read it to some of my friends. I would like to take it to one of my clubs and read it to them, ask them how they like it and I would like to let my mother and father hear and I would like say - have it be my speech at my summer club this summer.

5.

A. I liked it and it reminds me of witches and dark and cold nights. And it reminds me of the moon and the outside. It reminds me of Halloween. And a cold night.

B. It was like a witch story poem only it was like a man witch and they did about the same thing. He rides to the moon and back.

C. I liked it and one reason I liked it is because it was dark and scary. It reminds me of witches.

6.

A. It's about at night time the witch comes out of her tree stump - the forest is black as black can be - she shoots up into the air and she rises into the air like a rocket at sea and she rides the temple to the moon and back - tempest, I mean. Waiting for nights when it's clear, she ridings the dark and rides the cold, rides the wind and the night. A man with a hump of silver and he has telescope eyes and a telephone ear. When the storm winds shriek and the moon - I forget.

B. Those two and those two are the same. WHICH TWO? READ THEM. Except for the last ones - riding the wind and riding the night and riding the dark and riding the cold, just the last words are different.

C. I like it. I would have liked to make it up. I like there may be a man with a hump of silver. WHY DO YOU LIKE THAT? Because I'd like to have it myself. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE? The hump of silver. I like rose in the air like a rocket at sea. Riding to the moon and back. ------astronauts. The only thing I wouldn't like is to live in the stump of a tree, that wouldn't be too fun.

7.

A. Telescope eyes and telephone ear, I never heard of. Living in a burnt out tree. Dials to twist and knobs to twiddle. Waiting for the night when the skies are clear. She should go in the day so that people could see her. Whoever heard of a witch that rose in the air like a rocket. I don't think that the witch could ride to the moon on her broom. She couldn't blaze like speed, she could only go about two miles an hour.

B. The witch with the hump back and hooded. Living by herself in the burnt out tree, that is pretty impossible.

C. I like space a lot because I watched the splashdown on T.V. I like the part about the moon burned. I never heard of the moon being burned.

8.

A. About the telephone. I hate to answer it because it because every time that I do somebody says hello, hello. I let my grandmother answer it because she has a lot of friends and she goes to church every Sunday. She has a lot of friends. WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE POEM? I don't know what a poem is, what is that again. WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE POEM? I like where the witch was rolling down and her back was humped. Really I like the whole story. I used to have one but I didn't have any place for it. There was a witch that rolled down the hill. A lot of people roll down the hill but I didn't think that a witch would roll down the hill. Some of the witches have black hats. Some of the witches are good and bad. I never seen a real witch before and I don't want to see one.

B. Where she is hump up in the back. DO YOU BELIEVE IN WITCHES? Sometimes I don't think there are any witches in this town.

C. I think it is a good poem.

9.

A. I think it's a pretty nice poem I think the author meant for the witch humped back and hooded to be an old lady.

B. That the things he says--she rose in the air like a rocket at sea--he was trying to be funny and show action.

C. It was a very nice poem that the author made up. I think that the author made the story up put in some pretty descriptive words and I think he did a pretty good job at it.

10.

A. It was a nice poem. I enjoyed it and I think the person that wrote it should get a lot of credit for it. I think if he had done it before the men went to the moon it would be like predicting.

B. The witch and how he described her--humped back and hooded with a big witches hat. The burnt out tree. About the man having the telescope eyes and turning the knobs. You usually don't--another thing I noticed is the two things were similar. The witch went back to the moon and someday the man would fly to the moon and back. They were using two different ways to go there. There may be a man with a hump of silver with telescope eyes and telephone ears. What does that mean that he had his ear to the radio all the time listening to Cape Kennedy.

C. It's a real good poem. And that it was written very clearly so that the person could understand it. That most poems you see have rhyming words and this one doesn't. I like poems that have rhymes in it more than the other kind.

## Categorized Answers

Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

I liked it.
It's very funny.
In some ways it's funny.
I like poems like that.
It's spooky.
It's scary.

Score = 2

It wasn't true.
There is no such thing as witches and people don't live in burnt out trees.
I like it. I like rockets.
It kind of gave me a shock - the man with the telescope eyes. I never heard of anything with telescope eyes.
I like when they say the humped back witch. I liked

riding the wind and riding the night and the dark and the cold.

It was a Halloween poem.

Score = 3

I like when she lived by herself because all witches live by themselves. They might poison the people they live with so people don't like to live with them.

I liked the part about rocket because I would like to go to the moon and back.

The poem is nice and I want to go up to space sometime and I don't like the storm so much because then I can't go outside.

I think that some man could go to Mars and they should have a woman on the moon.

I don't like it too much because it's scary and sometimes when I look at Dark Shadows on T.V. in the night sometimes I get scared and dream about it. I never saw a witch rise in the air like a sea rocket.

When storm winds shrieked and the moon was buried. The dark of the forest was black as black. She rose in the air like a rocket at sea. The dark forest is like it is pictured in my mind.

When they talk about - rose in the air like a rocket at sea well, I was thinking when I read this book once and it had something like a ship shooting this missile up and then hitting a submarine.

Score = 4

When the man said the witch flies night and day. They don't fly in the day, they always fly in the night. I was thinking when I was reading it - I liked the way the man said about the woman - it sounded like he said a woman dressed up like a witch. They don't always fly on a broom. I was seeing a cartoon on the Banana Splits about Wendy the Witch. Well, it's just a cartoon and not for real.

I think it's real interesting because I like space. I like to study about the nine planets and the stars and the astronauts that go to space. Right here is the best part - there may be a man with a hump of silver, dials to twist and knobs to twiddle and to shoot from a scaffold with a blazing track. I think it is about when the astronauts - what they do when they're riding through the dark and the cool and what they do inside the spaceship and what they have on their body and all. And he controls the people on earth like at NASA. He talks to them on the moon and people like NASA tell how they are, what they are doing.

Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1

The words are not together. This paragraph not with this and all of it starts with capital letters.
It doesn't rhyme.
After each paragraph there is three words in two lines.
It sounds like lines was kind of broken into pieces.
It didn't have any rhymes in it.

Score = 2

It has good rhyming words in it.
It rhymes.
There were some words that did not rhyme and some words did.
In each stanza each word is changed around at the end. Both stanzas rhyme.

Score = 3

No samples.

Score = 4

No samples.

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

I don't understand it.
It has a lot of meaning.
I don't get this part because it doesn't make sense to me.

Score = 2

I didn't get the part when it said riding the wind and riding the night and riding the tempest to the moon and back.
It's about a witch that met a man and he went to the moon.
"She lived by herself in a burnt out tree" sounds like she's in a place where they just had a fire.

Score = 3

Both of these people are riding in this story. There is a witch and a man. They were both shooting into the sky.

It was about a witch and about a spaceman and how they travel.

Score = 4

Another thing I noticed is that the two things were similar. The witch went back to the moon and some day man would fly to the moon and back. They were using two different ways to go there. There may be a man with a hump of silver with telescope eyes and telephone ears. What does that mean? That means that he had his ear to the radio all the time listening to Cape Kennedy.

Category IV: Evaluation

Score = 1

It was good to me but I think it should have a little more words to it.

It sounds nice.

I don't think it's so good.

It's better than some poems I've read. It's the best poem I ever read in a book.

Score = 2

It's pretty good because it tells you stuff that you like to hear.

It's not such a good poem because it doesn't rhyme much and doesn't make much sense.

It's nice because it's kinda fun to read.

I think it's stupid because a witch don't go - there's no such thing as a witch.

Score = 3

It's really good - like the witch is like the astronaut.

Score = 4

No samples.

Category V: Retelling the poem.

Score = 1 (Incorrect or incomplete)

It was about witches. The man went up on the moon.
It was about this man with telescope eyes and telephone ears and dials to twist and to twiddle.
It is about a witch and she is riding the wind. She lives by herself. It is about space and everything and she is riding in the air. They were on a scaffold. She was riding the dark and riding the wind.
About a witch going out like a rocket at sea.
That there was witch hump backed and hooded and she lived in a burnt out tree.

Score = 2

MUST HAVE SIGNIFICANT POINTS ABOUT EACH STANZA.

Score = 3

I don't know and nothing else.
Unscorable responses and nothing else.

## Results for 13-Year-Olds

As at age 9, about two-thirds of the 13-year-olds responded with at least one engagement-involvement statement. The percentage for the post-high-school group was slightly (four points) higher.

One-third of the teenagers made perception responses. As the samples which follow reveal, most of those remarks were about the presence or absence of rhyme and most of them were quite short.

Thirty-two percent of the 13-year-olds made interpretive remarks, some of which were rated 3 or 4 for their insightfulness. The percentage of northeasterners whose statements were in this category was six points higher than the national figure, and the percentage for the post-high-school group was over 40%.

About half the students made evaluative statements, but most of these were remarks like "It was o.k.," "It's all right," and so on. No one group tended to make these statements more often than any other group.

Retellings occurred in 43% of the students' responses. The Southeast, the Blacks and the no-high-school group all contributed more than the average proportion of remarks to this category, for their percentages were 52%, 54%, and 65%, respectively.

Exhibit 11 displays the national and group percentages of 13-year-olds receiving adequate or better scores on any statement made in response to the poem.

Exhibit 11. Percentages of Adequate Responses, Age 13

```
%DIFF  PERCENT
 FROM  ADEQUATE
NATION RESPONSE VARIABLE       GROUP                    PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE
====== ======== ====================
                                     0       10      20      30      40      50      60      70      80      90     100
                                     +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +
   ---     14.7 NATIONAL             *************|                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                REGION                            |                                                                  |
 -4.5*     10.2            Southeast **********   |                                                                  |
  1.6      16.2                 West *************|*                                                                 |
 -1.9      12.7              Central ************ |                                                                  |
  5.3*     20.0            Northeast *************|****                                                              |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                SEX                               |                                                                  |
  1.8*     16.4                 Male *************|*                                                                 |
 -1.8*     12.9               Female ************ |                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                COLOR                             |                                                                  |
 -5.3*      9.4                Black **********   |                                                                  |
  0.9*     15.6                White *************|                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                PARENTAL EDUCATION                |                                                                  |
 -6.5*      8.2       No High School *********    |                                                                  |
 -7.6*      7.1     Some High School ********     |                                                                  |
  0.0      14.7  Graduated High Sch. *************|                                                                  |
  5.5*     20.2     Post High School *************|*****                                                             |
                                                  |                                                                  |
                SIZE-AND-TYPE                     |                                                                  |
                OF COMMUNITY                      |                                                                  |
 -3.8      10.8   Extreme Inner City ***********  |                                                                  |
 -4.9*      9.8        Extreme Rural **********   |                                                                  |
 -2.8      11.9           Small City ***********  |                                                                  |
 -1.1      13.6          Medium City *************|                                                                  |
  8.6*     23.2     Rest Of Big City *************|********                                                          |
  2.0      16.7      Suburban Fringe *************|*                                                                 |
  6.2*     20.8   Extreme Aff Suburb *************|******                                                           |
```

There were several significant differences from the national figure of 14.7%. Percentages for the Southeast, the Blacks, and the rural group were about 5 points lower and the two lowest parental education group percentages were 6.5 and 7.6 points below. The proportion of adequate responses given by females was significantly less than the national proportion.

The Northeast and post-high-school groups had percentages about 5% greater than the 15% national mark. Among the STOC categories it was the affluent-suburb (20.8%) and the rest-of-big-city (23.2%) groups which emerged with above national percentages. Males, too, received a greater portion of adequate or superior ratings for their responses than all 13-year-olds did.

Following are some samples of 13-year-olds' responses.

## TAPE RECORDED RESPONSES TO "SPACE TRAVELERS"
Age 13

### Answers to Each Question

1.

A. It is pretty good. It tells how a witch lived. And how a man with silver lived. And how he waited for the night to come, and how she waited for the night to come.

B. The first sentence on each line.

C. It is pretty good. It tells like I said a while ago, how they lived and how they wait for the night to come.

2.

A. It was kind of hard to understand.

B. That it had words that kind of rhymed.

C. It was OK.

3.

A. Well, it's about a witch, it seems to be evil and she rides through the night and it's cold and she's going to the moon.

B. It's talking about a man with a hump of silver with telescope eyes and telephone ears, it didn't seem to go along with the part about the witch. Well, to me it just doesn't seem to go with it.

C. I liked it, it would be nice to have in a class and for everyone to listen, especially since it's Halloween.

4.

A. The poem is OK except for about the telescope eyes and telephone ear sound more like they are talking about a telescope than space travelers.

B. It doesn't seem to say much about space travelers. It says about the witch with a hump back but that doesn't say nothing about space travelers cause she doesn't travel in space. I don't see what there may be a man with a hump of silver. I don't see what that has to do with space travel.

C. The poem is nice if they change some of the things, take some of the things out of there and put something sensible. It is a pretty good poem. If I was going to write it, I wouldn't put about a witch in there.

5.

Well, it's kind of a cool poem - I like I've never read it before I've never heard of the author. It's a nice poem. WHAT DOES IT SAY TO YOU, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY ABOUT IT? Well, it doesn't really mean anything factual to me, it's kind of not like a nonsense thing but more like what a person would write for fun. FOR WHAT REASON? Well, maybe he saw or did something that inspired him to write something like this - it's not something that would be factual like a lot of poems.

OK, PRETEND I'VE NEVER SEEN THE POEM BEFORE, THAT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE POEM, NOW TELL ME ABOUT IT. TELL ME ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY ABOUT THE POEM, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT I'VE NEVER READ THE POEM BEFORE AND DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT. Well, it starts out kind of WITHOUT READING IT. It's kind of hard to explain the poem because something that you really have to read. It's not really about anything, it's a - it says things - but it's not about a witch that - hmmm - is this...like am I supposed to tell you what it means literally? OK, IF YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO TELL. Well, it says that there is a witch who is hump back and hooded. There's a old witch that lived in a burnt out tree and the night and the storms and the forest was black. She flew in the night very fast. That's the end of one stanza and then it talks about a man with a telescope. You can't translate this into regular. I THINK YOU CAN. What I think I've been saying is wrong.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY ABOUT IT AT ALL, FEELING WISE OR? Well, it's just like the poem isn't meant to be told back, I don't think it has any clear meaning.

6.

A. It was scary sort of and I sure wouldn't like to be out when she goes out there.

B. There was a witch and they described in detail.

C. It was OK I guess and the printer or whoever wrote it must have had a good imagination.

7.

A. It seemed to me that the poem had some kind of meaning besides the regular words. I think too how it got its name because space travelers doesn't seem a good name for it.

B. I noticed mainly the description of the characters in the poem more than anything else. That the witch was hump backed and things like that and some of the description about where she lived, but mainly I noticed the description of the characters.

C. I liked it. It seemed like a Halloween poem to me. I didn't get the meaning if there is supposed to be one I don't know. I just liked it.

8.

A. Well, I think the witch is supposed to be like the space travelers like the Apollo astronauts and when it says the storm winds shrieked and the moon was buried, it meant it was like a cloudy night like when you see the wind. They were trying to predict what the weather would be so they could send them up. Telescope eyes and telephone ear, the telephone ear was like the radio they use. The telescope eyes are the cameras and the telescopes binoculars they use. And dials to twist and knobs to twiddle these are like the computers and that. To shoot from the scaffold with a blazing track, that's like the smoke coming out of the rocket. Riding the dark, well, it's dark in outer space and it's cold too. And they went to the moon and back and this witch went to the moon and back.

B. Well, it had a lot of words that stood another thing - like the moon was buried and the burnt out tree and it says the forest was black as black, she rose in the air like a rocket at sea.

C. Well, it's a good poem - really. Cause they are trying to tell you about space travelers and how the witch was supposed to be like a olden day space traveler.

9.

A. Well - I think it was written by somebody who knows what they're doing - they knew how to compose the poem - it seems a little far fetched but true - it's telling about - sort of like a witch or a witch doctor or something like this and wow! It sounds like it's about 20 years ago - but there's no specific time put down and it tells about us - we are being the witch in a way because we can fly to the moon and back and all things of this sort.

B. Oh - that the descriptions - "riding the wind" - it tells what she was riding - "like a rocket out to sea" - well - that's the second part of this is - "a hump of silver" - here's a hump back and a hood...well, it's about the same thing - both stanzas are about the same thing only they're telling about different things - like the first stanza, the last line is "riding the tempest to the moon and back." In the second stanza it's "riding the silence to the moon and back" which is almost the same except for one word tempest and silence - and then where he has "dial to twist and knobs to twiddle" well, that's about what we're doing now in our space age is twisting dials and twiddling knobs. And I think it's a very good poem.

C. Well - I think it's a good poem for the kind of poem it is. Sometimes I wish I had written it - to tell you the truth - and it's written in a more or less standard pattern - you have the standard pattern of rhyme - you don't have unusual - it's a good poem - I like it. Well - to tell the truth I like mystery stories which have to do with mystery and I'm a - you could say I'm a fanatic on space travel, it's something I like - that's another reason I like that poem, I'm a fanatic on both of them - so that's why I like it.

10.

A. It's sort of a weird poem because it's not really that true with witches riding around on broom and stuff and riding the silence to the moon and back - it sounds far fetched but it's not because we've gone to the moon.

And she was humped back. And the burnt out tree made into a house.

B. The bad weather and how she rode in the bad weather and there was a man with real good weather with telescope eyes and telephone ears.

C. I think it's real far fetched except for the part about riding to the moon and it's sort of a funny poem and how people might live in the future and we might be living in burnt out trees because of the pollution.

11.

A. I think this poem was written in a weird way. The author starts first about talking about make believe and then he skips and goes all past the 20th century. Talks about how man wants to go to the moon and all this. It starts out with the witch that is make-believe and doesn't write anything about man going to the moon and exploring or his interests. From this he goes to the 20th century full of wonder going straight to the moon.

B. He gives very good description of everything that he says. He says very little. First he describes the witch and after he gets through describing her, he writes two or three lines about the witch going to the moon and back. By the man, the lines he describes what he has his eye on and how he puts it in a way. Then he tells how the man goes and what he goes through to the moon and back.

C. I think the author that wrote it seems like a gangster. People going to the moon and everything. He writes about compares a witch with a man going to the moon. He uses three or brings out words to make it boring and scary. By the man, he says the silver thing, the telephone ear. Like it is boring to go and why do we want to go to the moon. He has no reason for what he is saying. Like riding the silence to the moon and back. He is not interested in what man does. He'd rather not to go than to go.

12.

A. It was about a witch and a astronaut and how their two different types of transportation differed. Like the witch rode in the air differently than the astronaut who had a rocket and the witch probably had a broom. And the poem tells it so that it describes the astronaut and the witch very well, except it doesn't tell you what the astronaut is and that makes you think of the good quality of it. And it tells you in a way so that you would be able to understand who he is and what he is doing. And it describes the witch's flight and the astronaut's flight and how they differ also.

B. The descriptions of both of the different rides were very well done. They showed the difference in modern transportation and what people used to think transportation would have been with the witches and everything. And how time has changed the transportation.

C. I think that it is very interesting. At first, I don't know what it meant, but after I listened to it over the tape recorder it sounded - it is rather hard to describe, but it is very interesting.

13.

A. It reminded me of Halloween. I never heard of a witch being well hump backed maybe, but hooded I don't think so. It sounds like it was on a stormy night. When she was on her rocket, well not a rocket, but her broomstick supposedly, in the sky. When they said riding the wind, riding the night, they meant like the wind and riding the night. It was like she was riding on the wind. The man with a hump of silver and telescope eyes was supposed to be a warlock and he could see anything from so far and he could hear anything. I guess he could do anything he wanted to do. He didn't go out like the witch did in the rain, he went out on a clear night. It was clear, but he rides at nighttime but it is usually cold. He rides in the silence of the sky. He doesn't see the meanness of the sky.

B. It was more like Halloween. One thing I noticed in the poem they think of witches being hump backed and hooded and nobody really knows how witches actually were. I just don't know. I don't think they should print about them because you can spread bad ideas about things and it scares little kids and things and they might not be that way at all. They could be something all together different like they may have ESP or something they can do better than other people, so they were considered as witches at the time. It is the same way as the man with a hump of silver, telescope eyes, and telephone ear. It was just something they knew how to do real well and he could see things and know what was going to happen. He can predict things and he is very sharp and he can hear things that was what most people thought like they were witches or something and they went out on these one nights to raid these one kind of people or something and they weren't really like that. And that is what I thought the poem was trying to get across that they were something like witches and they did things like normal people would.

C. I don't think they should make poems like this. I know it has been a tradition for a long time, but it is my place that they shouldn't. I guess people could say if I was living then they could say I was witch because I was known to have ESP before. I could put up cards and I could tell what they were some of the time and most of the time I would be right. So some people could think I could be a witch or something. It is just a thing passed down to your generation that you are able to do better. And I think it is about two people who can do things especially well, but some other people thought they weren't like human beings or they came from some other planet or something so they thought they went out on special nights, it had to be dark or cold or windy. They were from different planets so they go to see somebody. That was what I thought the poem meant.

## Categorized Answers

### Category I: Engagement - Involvement

Score = 1

It was funny and sort of cute.
I liked it.
I don't like poems like that.
It is unusual.
It's kind of spooky like.
I enjoyed it very much.
It's very interesting.
A pleasure to read.

Score = 2

It was for 4th or 5th graders to read. It was childish.
It reminds me of Halloween.

It is different. It is sort of hard to understand. It gives you more of a Halloween spirit than a space spirit to me.

The poem to me is weird. It has to do with witches and things like that. It is for kids and not for people like me.

I think some of it is true and some of it couldn't be because I don't think there are such things as witches.

I didn't like it because I didn't understand the full thing very clear.

Burned out tree - how can you live in a burned out tree? And rockets don't go to sea.

Score = 3

When you were saying about the trip to the sky, I was thinking of the men - the astronauts that go up to the moon. Witches ride the wind too.

It was interesting and it wasn't boring and it gave me feelings about things. It gave you the feeling that you were there in some parts.

It was like a fairy tale. I think it could be read to little children in order for them to learn more about space.

I think it's interesting and if we listen to it - we might want to be a man that goes to the moon someday.

I like science and I like the whole thing, had to do with space and the men going to the moon and all the people in the world have worked together to get to the moon. And we didn't just go there to claim it for ourselves, to say it was ours, but we went for all mankind for peace.

It was sort of about a witch and she can do stuff like some men wish that they could do. She rose like a rocket and you know now there's people and everyone is trying to have a race to space.

Score = 4

I noticed that it mentioned that she lived in a burnt out tree and I always thought of a witch as living in an old house. I just liked the way it said they were riding the wind. It didn't mention broomstick and the way they always do. I liked it and it certainly sound eerie and it made you feel like you were there watching the witch.

Category II: Perception - Analysis

Score = 1 (Factually incorrect)

Every last word in the sentences they all rhyme.
I noticed that only two lines in each paragraph rhyme.
The title doesn't fit the poem.
I don't think they belong, some parts.
It was in patterns like.
It switched from one part to another part.
It didn't have many words like most writers have like words that are hard to understand and it didn't rhyme like other poems did.

Score = 2 (Superficial or very brief)

It rhymed.
I think it's a short poem and it describes what people do.
It repeats some words. Doesn't rhyme a lot.
All of them go together, when it says "And the dark of the forest was black as black..." like it rhymes with each other.
It was good. By the way it sounded and the way it was put together. It was put together so that it rhymed a little bit.
I noticed that the poem was fiction.
And even though it was short, it had a little meaning to it.

Score = 3

There's a lot of colors emphasized and it expresses what she looks like. There's a lot of details and imaginative things like telescope eyes that really bring it out.
The writer of it was very explicit and it was easy to tell what he was trying to get at and he used good words - adjectives and adverbs to get the idea straight. Although the words didn't rhyme you could sort of feel the beat of it.

Score = 4

No samples.

Category III: Interpretation

Score = 1

I don't understand it.

I don't know what the poem means.
It has a lot of meaning, makes sense.
I think that it was most understandable.
It's kind of confusing.

Score = 2

I think they are comparing the forest, the spacemen... comparison between the earth and the outer world.
I didn't understand it. I didn't understand why he talked about the lady, then about the man. I don't understand why he talked about the man.
It's about this guy and everything, and it's different from the earth. The moon is different from the earth.
Well, it seemed like when they have - it seemed like when the witch was flying in the air the rocket was coming up.
I think it was about this house, this witch she used to fly around at night, how this man operated this control to see where she was going, the house he saw while she was gone away at night.
It was mostly about witches and what they do at night when they go out.

Score = 3

They're talking about the man with the hump of silver and the witch, comparing them together. She rose in the air like a rocket at sea, and to shoot from the scaffold with a blazing track is kind of together and then both of them went to the moon.
(I noticed) the contrast between the witch and the astronaut - their aims are the same.
It was about space travelers. They're both unusual. It says about the witch of course and the second one would be like a rocket ship. They both describe something that rides in space.
That it describes two persons, the first one a witch and the second one an astronaut and that they both ride at night in a rocket or a broom and they go up to the moon.
That poem like for space travelers and it talks about the witch and how she was, about what she wanted to do. And then it talks about a scientist and what he wanted to do and he also wanted to ride to the moon. But the witch wanted a dark and stormy night and the scientist wanted a clear night.

Score = 4

They were in a way comparing the witch with the space travelers and the comparison with the dark night and the wild night. She liked it a lot better then, and the man is up in space waiting for the exact same things. It was a clear night and it's silent, and she's like a wild person and exciting and he's like a quiet person. I sort of like the comparison - this could represent one completely different person and this could be a different person. This was the effect of the poem.

It seems to be comparing the old thought of flying. All we can expect is things about witches and imaginary things - and then the modern man, machines and everything and the way you can just take off. The first part is like it's before the mechanized age, it's the elements - and the second one is the machines and things.

Well, it's sort of a contrast between one thing that's magical and another thing that doesn't seem so unreal. It shows contrast between things make-believe and things now.

It was basically about rockets at sea and how it might be and what it went up for - like witches riding on brooms and then it got up to robots riding in space ships, going to the moon with rocket power, and it was basically about travel. (I noticed) that they talked about rockets at sea and they were talking about travel and how it had changed from when people thought there were witches, and how it developed into space travel with rockets and spaceships.

The two facts that they both had something to do with the sky. The witch flying through the air, the man studying the sky. How one is like the legend - the witch flying the air, and the other is a scientific fact - the man studying the sky.

Category IV: Evaluation - may also get credit for the reasons.

Score = 1

It was OK.
I think it is nice. It is all right.
The poem is not bad, but it's a little stupid.
It's nice to read.
It's not very good.
It is well written.

Score = 2

I think it was very nice. The words matched.
It was well written and all that, nice, because I like scary stories.

I thought it was a good poem. The way it was made I could understand it in each verse.
I think it is nice, because it tells where she lives, where she flies in the air - she must have a magic broom.

Score = 3

It was good because it showed how sort of compared the witches that they had a long time ago and the astronaut today.
The descriptions of both of the different rides were very well done.

Score = 4

No samples.

Category V: Perception - Retelling of the poem.

Score = 1 (Incomplete)

The lady was living in a tree.
It was about a witch and a man.
To shoot from the scaffold with a blazing track, riding the dark, the wind, riding on the silent moon and back.
(I noticed) just about the hump backed witch and that he went to the moon and back.
There was a witch that was hump backed. There was a man with a hump of silver and he had a telephone ear and telephone eyes. The witch, she lived in a burnt out tree.
(I noticed) that there would be a man with a hump of silver. I noticed that he waited for a night when the skies are clear and riding the silence to the moon and back.

Score = 2 (Must mention important points about both travelers.)

The poem is about space travel, about a witch, what she does. Tells you about a man, how his eyes and ears like a phone. How he has knobs to twiddle, and how he rides - like he rides the dark and the cold.
It's about space and traveling, and like the witch is on her broom and rides the wind and rides the night. And then the second one rides the dark and the cold.

## Age Comparisons

Major age differences appeared with regard to Categories II and III. Far more 13-year-olds than 9-year-olds made formalistic and interpretive statements while responding to the poem. Just as important, higher proportions of the older respondents received adequate or better ratings in these categories. At both age levels, the majority of perception responses related to the presence or absense of rhyme in the poem. This would suggest that when these students perceive a poem as a formal object, they tend to consider rhyme its most important formal quality.

## PART II

## WRITTEN RESPONSES

Verbal and tape recorded responses were categorized and rated statement-by-statement. In scoring written responses, however, readers categorized and rated entire essays.

Because of this difference in technique, the distribution of essay responses among the categories differs from the distribution found for verbal and tape recorded responses. About 1 essay in 11 was an engagement-involvement response, for instance; for the A. E. Housman poem, the proportion was 1 in 33. Regardless of stimulus or age level, there were always very few perception responses--in fact, never more than 3%. Thirteen-year-olds wrote fewer interpretive essays than 17-year-olds or adults. For instance, 29% of their responses to the poem "Space Travellers" were interpretive, whereas 81% of the adult responses to Housman's "Into My Heart" were interpretive. At all ages, however, a poetic stimulus prompted more interpretive essays and far fewer paraphrasings than did the stories. Evaluative compositions were almost as rare as formalistically oriented ones at all ages, but especially at the two oldest age levels. Retellings appeared most frequently at age 13--33% of the poetry responses and 55% of the story essays were mainly paraphrasings--but they almost disappeared at the higher age levels. Following are the essay scoring guide and Table 2, which presents the overall results.

### SCORING GUIDE

I. Engagement-involvement: What effect does the work have on me as an individual?
Does the student find the work believable, are the characters good or bad, do they remind him of people he knows or the situations he has observed in life? Does he question the actions of characters as if they were real, insist that they should do this or that? Does the student like the work? What sort of mood did it put him into? Is the response predominantly personal and subjective? The student might talk of his prejudices, his emotions, his thoughts, whatever.

Scoring: Inadequate--hardly articulated response ("I don't like it").

Barely adequate--describes the effect the work had on him without searching for the cause; or a vague description of student's mood upon finishing the work.

Adequate--statement of the effect the work had on student and a statement of the cause; vivid description of student's mood upon finishing the work; lively personal discussion.

Superior--effect the work had on student, clear statement of the cause; interesting and relevant personal discussion of the work or aspects of the work.

II. Perception: What is the nature of the work?

Description of the language, style or form of the work, a discussion of literary devices (metaphor, personification, etc.) in it, of its point of view or structure. Or a treatment of the work as a part of literary history; other academic discussions.

Scoring: Inadequate--factually incorrect, radically incomplete.

Barely adequate--a few, undeveloped formal statements.

Adequate--developed formal statements, not related to one another or related vaguely.

Superior--formal statements which rise above a mere catalogue of parts, describe several of the work's facets accurately, are perhaps organized to account for an over-riding hypothesis about the work.

III. Interpretation: What does the work mean?

What do the character's actions mean in relation to a universe of values outside of the work? What is the author's intention in writing the work? What is the moral? Any general response the intention of which seems clearly to be interpretive.

Scoring: Inadequate--student attempts to, but cannot, formulate an interpretation: "I don't understand."

Barely adequate--unverifiable or unverified hypothesis about the meaning of the work.

Adequate--student presents a hypothesis that accounts for the text and is somewhat verifiable.
Superior--a fully stated and supported hypothesis that accounts for most of the details in the text.

IV. Evaluation: Is the work a good work of art?

Is the work well-written? Was it effective in amusing or moving the reader? Was it sincere or imaginative? Did it deal with a serious matter? Is it worth reading?

Scoring: Inadequate--student says only that the work is good or bad.
Barely adequate--a weak statement of the criterion for the judgment and a weak statement of the measure of the work against the criterion.
Adequate--a clear formulation of criteria and an adequate measure of the work against them; appropriate criteria, relevant to the work.
Superior--statement which formulates the criteria of judgment well and measures the work against them with supporting details.

V. Retelling and paraphrase

Scoring: Ages 9 and 13

Inadequate: Factually incorrect, radically incomplete
Adequate: Accurate retelling of work, relatively complete

Scoring: Ages 17 and adult

Inadequate: factually incorrect or radically incomplete responses.
Barely adequate: correct but brief, neglecting important details.
Adequate: correct paraphrase covering major points.
Superior: correct and comprehensive paraphrase.

VI. Unusual Responses

Scoring: Numbers 1-4--holistic judgment of quality as above.

5--respondent copies poem (or part of poem) word for word
6--respondent writes new poem or story; continues the story or poem; elaborates creatively upon poem or story
7--digression totally unrelated to the exercise
8--illegible or unintelligible response

VII. Unclassifiable responses: those statements which contain apparently equal amounts of material from various categories, so that three different readers could not decide upon a dominant category.

VIII-1: "I don't know" or just title of work.
-2: fragment

00: Blank page

Table 2. Percentages of Essays in Each Category

| Literary Work | Age | I | II | III | IV | V | VI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Space Travellers" | 13 | 9% | 3% | 29% | 9% | 33% | 11% |
| "Half a Gift" | 13 | 12 | - | 21 | 4 | 55 | 6 |
| "Snake Dance" | 17 | 9 | 1 | 56 | 5 | 25 | 4 |
| "Into My Heart" | 17 | 3 | 1 | 86 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| "Snake Dance" | Adult | 8 | 1 | 69 | 2 | 16 | 1 |
| "Into My Heart" | Adult | 9 | 1 | 81 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

In general, the percentage of acceptable responses was greater on the written exercises than on the taped ones. Twenty-one percent of the 13-year-olds' essays about a poem received scores of 3 or 4, and 24% of their responses to a story were at least adequate. Interestingly, students in the inner-city group did very poorly on the poem but performed as well as all 13-year-olds in their response to the story "Half a Gift" by Robert Zachs--a sensitive portrait of an impoverished inner city family.

## Exercise R205

Age 13
Objective II

You are going to be asked to write a composition about a poem. I will read the poem to you while you read it to yourself. When we have read the poem carefully, write a composition in which you discuss the poem. We are more interested in what you have to say than in how well you say it. Put the title of the poem at the top of the next page.

### Space Travellers

There was a witch, hump-backed and hooded,

material deleted due to
copyright restrictions

Riding the silence to the moon and back.

Exhibit 12. Percentages of Essays in Each Category

| | Category | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII |
| Percentages | 9.3 | 3.1 | 29.3 | 9.4 | 33.1 | 11.0 | .5 | 3.6 |

This exercise employed the same stimulus as R204 but required a written, rather than a tape recorded response. As noted, written responses were not categorized in exactly the same way that tape recorded or verbal responses were. Scorers categorized entire essays instead of individual statements because the written exercises did not use probes or questions that tend to fragment people's responses to the work. Each respondent was free to give an uninterrupted reaction, the only constraints being the time limit (11 minutes) and his or her verbal ability.

The distribution of percentages in the five major categories was not the same for these essays as it was for the tape recorded statements about the same work. Only 9% of the essays, for instance, were classified as engagement-involvement responses, while the figure for the taped exercise was 66%. Twelve percent of the essays from the Northeast were in this category but that was the only group to differ at all from the national percentage. One-third of these Category I responses were rated adequate.

Only 3% of the compositions were formalistically oriented, whereas 32% of the recorded statements were of the perception variety. However, the percentages of interpretive responses were very similar for both the taped exercise and this one: 29% on this exercise and 32% on the previous one. Figures higher than 29% occurred for the Northeast (36%), the post-high-school group (36%), the affluent-suburb STOC group (39%) and the rest-of-big-city STOC group (37%). Below that figure were the Southeast (21%), Blacks (19%), the two lower parental education groups (17 and 23%, respectively), the rural students (21%) and the inner-city group (20%).

About 9% of the essays were evaluative. For males the proportion was 11% and for the post-high-school group it was 12.4%, but these were the only two groups which tended to write evaluative essays more often than all 13-year-olds taken together. When the recorded statements were categorized, six times as many fell into this category.

One essay in three consisted primarily of retellings or paraphrasings of the poem; the percentage for rural students was 11 points higher, while the percentage for the post-high-school group was 6 points lower. About half the retellings were rated adequate, about half inadequate.

As the scoring guide indicates, there were three more major categories for the written responses. Category VI was for unusual responses. In all, 11% of the papers were put into this category. Eight and a half percent consisted of literal transcriptions of the poem--that is, about one 13-year-old in twelve copied word-for-word parts of the poem or the entire poem. For the Southeast the figure was 19%, for Blacks it was 24% and for the no-high-school group it was 18%. Perhaps these students did not know what the word "composition" meant or they did not feel like writing.

Another kind of Category VI response was the creative essay. Nationally, 2% of the compositions were so classified. No one group had a significantly higher or lower percentage than this.

Category VII was reserved for essays which scorers felt would not fit any one category without being unduly distorted. Fewer than 1% of the papers were put into this category. Category VIII was reserved for all papers upon which the student wrote only "I don't know" or some fragment. In all, 3.6% of the essays were like this.

Exhibit 13 displays the national and group percentages of students who received adequate or better ratings for their compositions.

Exhibit 13. Percentages of Adequate Essays

(Rating 3 or 4)

```
%DIFF  PERCENT
 FROM  ADEQUATE
NATION RESPONSE  VARIABLE       GROUP                                   PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE
====== ========  ===================
                                     0         10        20        30        40        50        60        70        80        90        100
                                     +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +
   ---     20.8  NATIONAL            *********************+                                                                              |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                 REGION                                   |                                                                              |
 -5.2*     15.6           Southeast ***************      |                                                                              |
 -1.4      19.4                West *********************|                                                                              |
  0.9      21.7             Central *********************+                                                                              |
  5.7*     26.5           Northeast *********************+*****                                                                         |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                 SEX                                      |                                                                              |
 -2.5*     18.3                Male ******************** |                                                                              |
  2.7*     23.5              Female *********************+**                                                                            |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                 COLOR                                    |                                                                              |
-12.6*      8.2               Black ********             |                                                                              |
  1.6*     22.4               White *********************+*                                                                             |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                 PARENTAL EDUCATION                       |                                                                              |
-14.6*      6.2      No High School ******               |                                                                              |
 -7.3*     13.5    Some High School *************        |                                                                              |
 -0.2      20.6 Graduated High Sch. *********************|                                                                              |
  8.8*     29.6    Post High School *********************+********                                                                      |
                                                          |                                                                              |
                 SIZE-AND-TYPE                            |                                                                              |
                 OF COMMUNITY                             |                                                                              |
-13.7*      7.1  Extreme Inner City *******              |                                                                              |
 -9.0*     11.8       Extreme Rural ***********          |                                                                              |
 -0.5      20.3          Small City *********************|                                                                              |
  1.8      22.6         Medium City *********************+*                                                                             |
 -1.7      19.1    Rest Of Big City ******************** |                                                                              |
  2.9      23.7     Suburban Fringe *********************+***                                                                           |
  7.7*     28.5  Extreme Aff Suburb *********************+*******                                                                       |
```

Though the national percentage was 21%, significantly higher percentages occurred for the Northeast (27%), females (24%), Whites (22%), the post-high-school parental education group (30%) and the extreme-affluent-suburb STOC group (29%). The Southeastern regional group was 5% below the national level, males were 3% below, Blacks were 13% lower, the no-high-school group 15% and the inner city 14% below the percentage of adequate or better responses established by all 13-year-olds.

Following are sample responses to this exercise. Though they represent only 19 out of over 2,000 such essays, they illustrate the range of responses the poem generated. The bulk of the essays written about this poem were short expressions of bafflement or perfunctory descriptions of the witch and the man in the poem.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "SPACE TRAVELLERS"

### 13-Year-Olds

1. Did not like becaose it is childlish and I am not a child

2. I don't like the peom because they are teasing the poor thing if there was'nt a witch their wouldn't be halloween.

3. I don't like the poeam to much. I don't believe in witches. But at the End of the story it tells about that guy going to the moon in a rocket.

   It makes you feel scared some about the witch. I like the part about the man going to the moon because I"am an Ameture Astronomer.

4. I have never heard a Poem something like this before. But I think it's something like Halloween because it's something about moon, witch, dark black, riding in the night. But I dig, its cool, and she lived by herself and most of the times when people live by their selves in kind of a big house they get lonesome, scared and specially when its gets Pitch Black and you be glad when it gets morning again. but anyway the witch shouldn't be scared because she scares people herself.

   THE End

5. This poem explains that there is a witch. A witch who lived in an old broken down house which was in a tree. This witch, in my opinion, is dum, idiotic, and if I wasn't taking this test I would have never read this stupid poem if I was being payed for reading. First of all as an eights grader I do not believe in any of this child's play. A man with telescopic eyes what phony junk I couldnt care less about this dum humbug. I mean for someone to be as creative as this, It's sickening. I mean I understand that writers use alliteration and personification but this is going just a little bit to far.

6. The composer seemed to be comparing the witch with the man incept they were sort of turned arround, The witch waited for a dark night while the man waited for a clear night

   It seemed the two halves have the same number of words and that were placed in the same form

   The first half was in the past, and the second half was in the future

   The last word on the first sentence in both halves didnt have any other word that rymed with them

7. They are discriding two different kinds of space travellers one's imaginery and one isn't. I like the first one better. It just seems more exciting somehow, its more spookier. It seems to have more drama to it to me.

   The rhyme scheme of the first stanza is ABCDHEFD. The rhyme scheme of the second stanza is ABCBDEFD. Not many of the words rhyme.

   The poem tells of two different trips to the moon.

8. Space Travellers, I think, isn't a good title. It should be something that has to do with Halloween. The second stanza isn't so much of a Halloween poem, though. The words describe the witch good. I don't understand the second stanza figure. It could be a martian.

9. I think this poem tells about the many things in space that we do not know about. For example "There may be a man with a hump of silver, telescope eyes and a telephone ear" This tells me that without exploring space we will not know if any of these things exist. It is a fiction story but it has a moral. You'll never know anything at all if you don't go out, put your mind to it, and explore into the future.

10. A witch riding on her broom stick through the air, when the winds were blowing hard & you couldn't see the moon, because of the clouds covering it. The forest having no light in it.

    She was riding in the wind & in the night. She supposedly rode up to the moon and back.

    They are saying how this witch waits for a night like this when - a man in a rocket waits for a clear skies - to shoot up in the rocket - a fiery red streak after it. Then riding the silence to the moon and back. When the witch rode the tempest to the moon & back. The author is kind of comparing these two differnt space travellers.

11. The title of the poem is good. Although the witch does not go out in the space with stars in it, she is in space.

    This poem is sort of fiction and reality mixed together. The witch is fiction and the man is reality. He is in a obsitory studing the stars and he has to have a clear night to do that. But the witch is bad, and a dark gloomy night is sunshine to her.

    They both are doing what they like and that's all that matters.

12. The author is comparing our space-age now with myths a while ago. Both are referred to as some sort of monster or creature. One is man's invention of the mind; the witch, The other is man's invention put into effect; the spaceship. The witch seems to be more human than the spaceman. One of the differences between the two is that the witch goes out on stormy nights, and the spaceship on clear nights. They are basically the sam (the witch & spaceman).

13. The poem compares the old tales of witches flying to the moon and back with modern day man in his attempt to conquer space. Some a the descriptions of that man - today's - are even more eerie than those describing the witch - "telephone ear" and "telescope eyes" yugh. Even though 1 rides on a storm & the other during a calm the feeling of madness is in both. Knobs to twiddle "reminds me of some mad scientist, maybe it's saying that our urge to get to the moon is as mad as the witches in the superstitions in fairy tales. That they both - space-man & witch - come from our urge to sail wildly through the night, looking for adventure.

14. I think this poem is trying to express how man is striving to gain knowledge, represented by the observes in the poem, while mysteries, represented by the witch, still are evident which we still don't quite understand. Even with all our tools, represented by the knobs & dials, there are still things which we have to learn. Man might want to explore other places (planets) while the witch takes it for granted. The witch might live under bad conditions while man is secure but the witch can fly

15. I don't think that it is a good poem. I don't understand it and nothing rimes. Doesn't make any sense.

16. This poem, I basically liked because it put forth a good mood and feeling with the witch in the first part. However, words and cliches such as "humpbacked," "black as black," and "Knobs to twiddle," are not very descriptive they are to "childish". But they do get the point across.

    The comparison between the witch and the lunor rocket, which was excellently described as a "mechanical witch," is very good. It shows both a contrast and a comparison between flight on a broom and flight in the technical sense on a modern spacecraft.

17. There once was a witch named Hilda. She lived in a tree in the dark part of the forest. On weekends she would ride through the air on her broom. One day she meet a handsome young man. She like the young man but she thought to herself she was so ugly. Then, on the next day she turned the man into a frog. She thought to herself if she turned the man into a frog and if she turned herself into a frog the man would like her. So with one wave of her hand they were both turned to frogs. They lived happily everafter.

18. They were in sea one night they came out of the sea and right in the sky and they went flying right up into space and the moon was light in the sky and there was millans of star out that night You should of seen all of the star out that night and the wind was bloing and the tree did not have very many leav on them because it was in the fall and the wind blew so hard that I was, just about frose then it started to snow a little bit great big flake came down soon the graun was croved with all the snow on the groun then all the tree were bear there is no leav on the tree now.

19. There may be a dog with hunk of lead
with bloodest eyes that are black and red
With a horse's tail and a cow's feet
Who eats nothing but lemburger meat
Waiting to blast off with his rocket ear
He may not be back for a million years
Riding through space
Riding through stars
Hitchiking in way out space cars.

I think this poem helps exspand the imagination Children at the ages of 9 and under like to hear weird words.

## Exercise R206

Age 13
Objective II

You are going to be asked to write a composition about a story. I will read the story aloud as you read it yourself. When we have read the story carefully, write a composition in which you discuss the story. We are more interested in what you have to say than in how you say it.

### Half a Gift*

by

Robert Zacks

I was ten years old then, and my brother, Nick, was

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restrictions

mother very happy."

---

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burdens. They escape in pretty baubles rather than

material deleted due to
copyright restrictions

Nick looked at me with love in his eyes.

Exhibit 14. Percentages of Essays in Each Category

| | Category | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII |
| Percentages | 12.0 | .2 | 20.5 | 4.1 | 54.5 | 5.8 | .2 | 1.2 |

As might be expected, responses to stories do not follow the same pattern as responses to poems. Thirteen-year-olds tend to do much more paraphrasing of stories and write far fewer formalistic or evaluative essays than they do when confronted with a poem.

Twelve percent of the compositions written in response to "Half a Gift" were of the engagement-involvement variety. No one group tended to write more of these sorts of essays than any other group.

Fewer than one-half of one percent of the papers were categorized as perception responses. However, 21% were interpretive. The figure was even higher for the Central regional group (25%), females (25%), and the affluent-suburb STOC group (29%). Interestingly, four-fifths of these responses received ratings of 3 or 4, indicating that the writers were able to understand the story and relate its message to some system of values in the world around them.

Only 4% of the compositions were evaluative in nature. Few of the writers of these essays articulated the criteria by which they were evaluating the story and fewer still referred to the story to defend whatever judgment they made about it.

More than half of the 13-year-olds retold a part or all of the story. Though three-fifths of these responses were judged adequate by the scorers, it should be remembered that this only means they were adequate as retellings. Teachers who do not consider plot summary an important kind of response would probably consider all of these inadequate. The only group with a notably higher than national percentage of responses in this category was the Southeast. Sixty-seven percent of the essays from this region were retellings.

Six percent of all the essays fell into Category VI, reserved for unusual answers. Most of these (3.7%) were creative elaborations upon the story or new stories altogether. Fewer than 2% of all the essays were "I don't know" or fragment responses, and only 1.6% of all the 13-year-olds wrote nothing at all.

Exhibit 15 presents the national and group percentages of people who received adequate or better ratings for their compositions.

## Exhibit 15. Percentages of Adequate Essays

```
%DIFF  PERCENT
 FROM  ADEQUATE
NATION RESPONSE   VARIABLE      GROUP                       PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE
====== ========   ==================
                                      0       10      20      30      40      50      60      70      80      90      100
                                      +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +       +
   ---    23.9   NATIONAL             *******************|                                                            |
                                                         |                                                            |
                 REGION                                  |                                                            |
 -9.3*    14.6              Southeast ************       |                                                            |
  3.4     27.3                   West *******************|**                                                          |
  3.6     27.5                Central *******************|**                                                          |
  1.9     25.8              Northeast *******************|*                                                           |
                                                         |                                                            |
                 SEX                                     |                                                            |
 -6.2*    17.7                   Male **************     |                                                            |
  5.9*    29.8                 Female *******************|****                                                        |
                                                         |                                                            |
                 COLOR                                   |                                                            |
-11.9*    12.0                  Black **********         |                                                            |
  2.6*    26.4                  White *******************|*                                                           |
                                                         |                                                            |
                 PARENTAL EDUCATION                      |                                                            |
 -9.0*    14.8         No High School ************       |                                                            |
 -0.8     23.1       Some High School ****************** |                                                            |
  0.5     24.4    Graduated High Sch. *******************|*                                                           |
  6.6*    30.4       Post High School *******************|****                                                        |
                                                         |                                                            |
                 SIZE-AND-TYPE                           |                                                            |
                 OF COMMUNITY                            |                                                            |
 -5.4     18.5     Extreme Inner City ***************    |                                                            |
 -5.3     18.6          Extreme Rural ***************    |                                                            |
 -0.3     23.5             Small City *******************|                                                            |
 -2.7     21.2            Medium City *****************  |                                                            |
  6.7     30.5       Best Of Big City *******************|****                                                        |
 -0.2     23.7        Suburban Fringe *******************|                                                            |
 12.6*    36.5     Extreme Aff Suburb *******************|*********                                                   |
```

Three variable groups registered percentages significantly greater than the national figure of 24%: females (30%), Whites (26%), the post-high-school parental education group (30%) and the teenagers who attend suburban schools in predominantly professional (white collar) neighborhoods (affluent suburbs)-- 37%.

Regionally, the Southeast again performed below the national level, along with Blacks, males and students in the no-high-school group.

It may be of interest to note that the inner-city STOC group, which is often significantly below the nation in its percentage of adequate responses, was not below it on this exercise. It may well be that both the subject and setting of this story were closer to the experience of inner city children and therefore elicited more interest and reaction than other materials which were quite distant from the inner city experience. If so, then it may also be true that this group's performance on other exercises is less a consequence of an inability to write well than of an inability or lack of desire to relate to the work of literature used in the exercises.

Following are some sample responses to this story.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "HALF A GIFT"

### 13-Year-Olds

1. It was a very sad story I liked it very much. The story realy gets to your ♡.

   I realy liked the part when the Boy comes up with the pale and mop, it was to bad that it was a poor family.

2. The story Half a Gift but it was to fake. A mother should & always would be happy what ever she was given. At least she could of liked it. It was a advange to easier work. She should of wanted to know they were poor, but Nick wanted to give her something nice.

3. I heard this story before when I was a lot younger. But it didn't change the story. I felt sorry for Nick, because he was only trying to help. He was young, and didn't really know women good enough to know what to buy.

   I was really proud of Joe when he didn't give his mother the comb. It would have made the pail look so ugly.

   I also thought that it was very sweet of the two boys to save up all of their money just to buy a Mother's Day Gift.

   Stories about poor people usually keep me interested, as this one did. I find it hard to imagine me going through some of the things that they go through.

   Working for a nickel for each delivery is ridiculous to me. But it seems all right to them. Of course, I don't know what a nickel would buy in those days.

4. I think the story had showed very much love in it. It showed how a brother show love for his brother. It was sad but it did begin to be good at the end. I like old story. I think that they should make more story like that. I enjoy that kind and I don't see why anybody else can't. I don't understand why the mother didn't like her gift. Maybe because she didn't see how it worked. Instead she

had just saw the pail not the mop. It was a good fiction story. I would rate it excellent because it shows so much love. It probably could or would make a good non-fiction story because I could see that happening in a home. People being poor right after the war. Not giving very

5. I liked the story because it seemed real. The time and place wasn't so real but the way they acted was good.

   The story was better then some of the others I've read because in this story you could beleive it. It was like it realy happened

   I liked it because the mother acted like a real person not like anyone who had mad it up.

   The story was good because they where not unusual peaple, people being happy because they where poor or unhappy because they didn't have any money or anything.

6. The story has a good plot, but the rising action is slow. The climax is when Nick gives his mother the pail. There is good dialogue, although I noticed only 1 or 2 similes.

   The theme is appreciate what helps make work lighter and do not fall back of immaterial but petty things to try to make life less difficult.

   The characterization is good, making the reader beleive that all the people in the story could actually have been real.

   And the story is neatly compact, nothing unnecessary added, nothing necessary left out.

   The story works out well in the 1st person.

7. This story is about 2 boys who buy a Mothers Day present for their mom. It is just after World War I, and times are very hard.

   Nick, the older boy, gives thier mother a new mop and pail. While Joe gets a comb with rhinstones in it. They end up giving the pail and mop together. Joe doesn't want his mom not to like Nick's present. He doesn't want Nick to feel bad. He knows that his present would make Nicks feel like 'just' a mop and pail.

   Joe loves his brother and doesn't want him to feel bad.

Nick ends up mopping the floor for his mother. But at least he doesn't have to feel bad about giving a present that isn't as good as Joes.

This story shows the love of 2 boys. It shows how a family can really care for each other.
Not many brothers are like this. They want to compete against each other.

8. The Story "Half a Gift" is a story that shows devotion, understanding and wisdom in a family of the lower class. It demonstrates devotion in the last paragraph by showing the little boy not wanting to show his brother up. Understanding in the family is illustrated by the father when he didn't get mad at Nick but instead went back upstairs and patched things up. Wisdom is cleary seen in Father by the method he used to make Nick & his mother feel better over the misunderstood gift of the scrub pail.

9. This is a story; about more than one thing, Poverty and love - both family and brotherly. In my opinion, the story has a good description of all these things. It was a story with a moral and a plot. It held the reader's attention during all parts of the story. In conclusion, I think it was a good story.

10. I think this story is very well written. It is beleiveable and also has good sense, while subtly dropping a moral on you. It shows how a family should be, with everybody understanding everyone else. Also, it shows that helping another person can be useful and rewarding, even though you sacrificed something of your own, that is, being unselfish.

    People should take some of this story and put it in their everyday lives, for it would be enriched and be much more pleasant. If everyone would do this, the world be a better place in which to live.

11. One day there was this boy who loved his sisters very much. He loved them so much, he didn't want to leave them. So one day his father said, how would you like going to summer camp. He said with excitement yes I would father. So he sent him to summer camp with some other boys. When he got in the car, the other boys were crying, because they didn't like summer camp. So they cried all the way up their. So the next day one of the boy's cried all week. So his father came and got the boy and took him home to his sisters. After that felt very happy. His father didn't know he loved his sisters that much.

12. I was about to be hung for killing a gaurd. I started thinking of my past, if I didn't pay enouth entition to my kids and wife. Did I give them everything that I had to offer them. Did I do special things for them. I started thinking if other people only knew how short of life we really have would they be paying mor antition to there freands. If only I had time I sad to myself would I was it for my kids or would I get into mour of a mast then I am in. It takes so long to made life

13. FOOTBALL

Football is a good and fun game and it is rough when you play tackle.

I played for the Y for four year and for the school one. I like to play football because it is fun

Football is fun when you play it right.

14. I weld going to the you this going it againt ware a the ware an the are pire were she ant againt going apler there my Mother and Father and mys eles and Fount againt the were was went the time an the plant gone all my stsih and brother going the an there an were going the was

## Exercise R207

Ages 17, Adult
Objective II

Write a composition in which you discuss this story. We are more interested in what you have to say than in how you say it.

### SNAKE DANCE*

By Corey Ford

"Hello. That you, Mom?...Oh, I'm sorry, operator,

material deleted due
to copyright restrictions

There was a tiny silence.

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Exhibit 16. Percentages of Essays in Each Category

| Age | Category<br>I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | 8.8 | 1.2 | 55.6 | 4.9 | 24.6 | 3.7 | + | + |
| Adult | 7.9 | 1.4 | 69.4 | 2.0 | 16.3 | .8 | + | .7 |

As a number of respondents pointed out, this story presents a somewhat dated picture of college life and adopts a very sentimental point of view. It is not necessary, though it is desirable, for a stimulus to be a great work of art in order for it to elicit responses worthy of study. This particular story is useful as a stimulus because of its obvious (even heavy-handed) irony. If a respondent assumes in his or her composition that Jerry is really a football hero and popular fraternity man then we know that he or she has neglected some very important narrative signals while responding to the work. This tells us something about reading ability and critical acumen and, in particular, such essays provide us with information about how many people recognize and deal effectively with irony in a work of literature.

Recognition of Jerry's real situation was a necessary, but not in itself sufficient, prerequisite for an adequate or superior composition. Essays which missed the irony were scored either inadequate or barely adequate, because the writers misread the story and it was felt that all adequate critical responses to the story should be based upon an accurate reading of it.

## Results for 17-Year-Olds

Nine percent of the essays were engagement-involvement responses. Many of the essays discussed what the writer would do in Jerry's situation, and in many of them students detailed their feelings about the story. No one variable group had a percentage significantly greater than this national figure.

Only 1% of the papers were formalistically oriented, but 56% were interpretive. The percentages for females and the post-high-school group were over 60%. The majority of these essays were character analyses and attempts to prove that Jerry is either a very good boy or a very sick boy. Some writers invoked the title to demonstrate that Jerry is a sort of snake twisting his way between truth and falsehood, meaning to do good but ultimately betraying his own and his parents' ideals. Others asserted that the theme was fidelity to one's parents and the moral a commendable recommendation to lie when the circumstances make it appear just to do so. More than three-fifths of the interpretive responses were rated adequate or better (3 or 4).

Five percent of the teenagers responded to this story with an evaluative essay, and most of these essays were critical of the story and its author.

About one composition in four was a retelling of the story. Low rated paraphrases generally retold the story literally with no apparent recognition of Jerry's true situation. Adequate or better retellings were accurate paraphrases. Though the national percentage of papers in this category was 25%, the figures for some groups were greater: males (28%), Blacks (33%), the no-high-school group (33%) and the some-high-school group (32%).

About 4% of the papers were categorized as unusual responses and most of these (2.8%) were "creative." The percentage of creative responses written by Blacks was 4.3%.

Exhibit 17. Percentages of Adequate Essays
(Rating 3 or 4)

```
%DIFF   PERCENT
 FROM   ADEQUATE
NATION  RESPONSE VARIABLE                   GROUP                                        PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE
======  ======== ===============================
                                                  0         10        20        30        40        50        60        70        80        90        100
                                                  +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +         +
  ---     43.6   NATIONAL                         *******************************************|                                                        |
                                                                                             |                                                        |
                 REGION                                                                      |                                                        |
 -4.7*    38.9                          Southeast ***************************************    |                                                        |
 -1.1     42.6                               West *******************************************|                                                        |
  3.8     47.5                            Central *******************************************|****                                                    |
  0.3     43.9                          Northeast *******************************************|                                                        |
                                                                                             |                                                        |
                 SEX                                                                         |                                                        |
 -8.3*    35.3                               Male ***********************************        |                                                        |
  7.4*    51.0                             Female *******************************************|*******                                                 |
                                                                                             |                                                        |
                 COLOR                                                                       |                                                        |
-18.6*    25.0                              Black *************************                  |                                                        |
  2.4*    46.0                              White *******************************************|**                                                      |
                                                                                             |                                                        |
                 PARENTAL EDUCATION                                                          |                                                        |
-13.5*    30.1                     No High School ******************************             |                                                        |
 -7.6*    36.0                   Some High School ************************************       |                                                        |
 -1.1     42.5                 Graduated High Sch. *******************************************|                                                        |
  8.6*    52.3                   Post High School *******************************************|********                                                |
                                                                                             |                                                        |
                 SIZE OF COMMUNITY                                                           |                                                        |
 -1.5     42.1                           Big City ****************************************** |                                                        |
 -2.9     40.7                        Small Place *****************************************  |                                                        |
  0.9     44.5                        Medium City *******************************************|*                                                       |
  4.6     48.2                       Urban Fringe *******************************************|****                                                    |
```

Exhibit 17 displays the percentages of adequate or better responses. Nationally, 44% of the 17-year-olds received adequate or superior ratings for their responses to this story. In some variable groups the figure was notably greater: 51% for females, 46% for Whites, and 52% for the post-high-school parental education group.

Significantly below the national percentage were the Southeast (39%), males (35%), Blacks (25%), and the two lower parental education groups (30 and 36%, respectively).

Following are some sample essays arranged according to the categories they were placed in. They are prefaced by these brief scoring observations.

CATEGORY I. Sample 1 is a minimal sort of response; 2, a very funny, obviously personal response, with elements of Category IV in it; 3 could also be a Category VI, but its candid approach to the story and its digressiveness are typical properties of Category I's.

Sample 4 is a good example of an adequate engagement-involvement response, reflecting a primarily subjective approach to the story; 6 and 7 are typical in the same way.

Sample 5 is in this category because the student gets caught up in his own preoccupations after he begins discussing the story.

II. Samples 1-3 are II-2's; 4-6 are typical of adequate and superior formal responses.

III. Most interpretive responses were so categorized because students attempted to analyze Jerry's character in various ways (why he lies, why he's so nervous, how he probably feels about his father and mother, etc.). Attempts to descry a moral to the story also fall into this category. Inadequate responses either had no explanation for Jerry's behavior or explained it incorrectly. Samples 1-7 are III-1's and 2's, generally insufficient or undeveloped. Numbers 8-14 represent adequate and superior interpretive responses to the story.

IV. Samples 1-5 are either inadequate or barely adequate, since their judgments are not backed up well and their criteria remain vague. Samples 6-9 are adequate evaluations of the story; 10-12 are superior evaluations, though they are critical of the story both as a work of literature and a repository of values. Students who praised the story did so with little, if any, supporting evidence; but those who attacked it generally marshalled supporting arguments quite well.

V. Unsatisfied with the 2 point scale used for this category in the 13-year-old scoring, scorers went back to a 4 point scale: 1's were factually incorrect and/or radically incomplete (Sample 1); 2's were factually correct and relatively complete synopses which missed the irony--i.e., retold the story as if Jerry really were a football hero, fraternity man, etc. (Sample 2); 3's retold the story, indicating that Jerry was lying to his mother (Samples 3-5); 4's (few in number) were very complete synopses which accurately paraphrased the story with superior cogency and understanding (Samples 6 and 7).

V-3's and 4's were distinguished from III-3's and 4's by their omission of any significant explanations of Jerry's behavior or generalizations about the implications of his actions or the overall meaning of the story. Such remarks as "He sends money home to help his folks," or "He didn't want his mom to worry," or "He was concerned about his dad," were not considered sufficiently 'interpretive' to warrant putting the whole response into Category III, especially when it was clear that the writer's overall intent was simply to repeat the story as he heard it.

VI. Sometimes there are unusual responses that do not fit any one category particularly well, or are funny, or are just plain bizarre. These few generally wind up in Category VI-1, 2, 3, or 4. Sample 1, for instance, could probably be an I-2 or a III-2 response, but those categories would not do justice to its pecularity.

VI-5's were much rarer at this age than they were with the 13-year-old essays. VI-6's are, as usual, entertaining: see Samples 2-5. VI-7's, as Samples 6 and 7 demonstrate, tend to be digressions critical of the test itself, though sometimes they ramble into uncharted regions.

VII. Samples 1 and 2 are typical of Category VII responses, of which there were very few.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "SNAKF DANCE"

### 17-Year-Olds

### CATEGORY I

1. I liked the story except for it sounded like he smoked and drank a little to much. I didn't like the ending it came just a little two blunt and kind of left me in the air.

2. The passage was, (although unclear of purpose), probably designed as a stimulus for exposition of literary ideals on my part, but not knowing whether an evaluation, a recount, or something else is in order, I shall suffice to comment that I found the whole affair rather pointless.

   Certainly, symbolic meanings may be found in everything, yet this isolated, non-climactic "novelty" has little asthetic content to render it appealing even for the purpose of probing for symbolic meanings.

   NOTE: I AM IN A CYNICAL MOOD.

3. Composition

   We now have 13 1/2 minutes to write a composition about the theme we have just read. I'm not sure whether or not I should take this seriously. The "snake dance" does this happen still, well if it does I don't really care. Nice pitiful story about a guy who's worried about his mom now that his dad's laid up and there's no one to take care of her. Basically the story didn't strike me as one of an emotional stimuli. There was no real feeling for the plot. Could be just the way it was handled, ie being read off a tape and me being bored to death with this test as it is. I could be in third period creating music with the rest of our symphonic band. As it is I'm stuck here in a very rebellious mood not particularly interested in this what seems to be a rich man's test. What with tape recorders, specially embossed pencils, and these fancy parts of paper, ie because of waste of space on each page of paper, booklets whoever is making these tests or is sponsoring them must be rich. Just mentally calculating how much this all costs what with this test being nationally distributed. I think this test could be better designed. I'm 16 and I think my 10 year old brother could do this, take the test that is, all except this comp part. I better quite but remember its not how you say it, it's what you say.

4. I feel proud of Jerry. I feel proud of him because he had guts to work and send the money to His mother. But it was a shame that he has to lie about what he was doing. I admire him because most people in that situation would run away and hide. You could tell that Jerry loved his parents very much. But it is a shame that he can't tell his parents the truth

   The main question I asked myself after reading this was what will happen to Jerrys relationship with his parents? Sooner or later they are going to find out. When they do find out will they still love and respect him. Or will they disown him. If there any type of parents when they find out the truth. They will forgive Jerry even admire him a little since Jerry is there son they must love him and forgive him for what he did.

   This is my own personnel feelings. I based them on my relationship between my parents and myself. I also though what happend if Jerry was my son. How would I react. So putting this all together I came up with my statement

5. Well, I'll tell ya. You see, this guy, Jerry, kinda homesick and shook up a bit cause his pop's laid up for a while. Another thing, Jerry is kinda sick of all this publicity he gets. He just seems to be proud of it for his mothers sake. Jerry probably wished he could be this popular, but know that he is, I think he regrets it. If only a person filled with The Spirit would come up and share the power of Jesus Christ with him. Through their combined prayer they could probably really help Jerry's father out with his physical hang ups. How many football players has Jesus helped? Ask Rex Kern, quarter back of the Ohio State football team and he'll tell you about the Jesus Athletic Fellowship that enrolls thousands of professional athlies such as the World weight lifting champion Paul Anderson. Praise the Lord!!

6. I think if my father was sick in bed, and I was still going to school. I would have finish going to school. get me a job after school, and help my mother pay the bills take care of my father, with the money I make. But if I were away some where, I'll sent her the money, or, call her and tell her how am feeling, how's school coming out, and Hows my job is. But I would lie to my mother I'll tell her the truth.

7. I think that what Jerry did was wrong in a way. He should not have led his mother to believe he was a super star because he wasn't. He should have told the truth, But on the otherhand it was good under the circumstances. Naturally every mother is happy and proud when her son goes to college and makes it big. It probably really cheered her up and made things better for her. Yet when he comes home or something he will have to tell her the truth and that may hurt her more than anything. Then she may think of it in another way that he was only trying to make it better for her so she will forgive him.

CATEGORY II

1. The story was misleading in the beginning but as it went on it built up to and ironic ending. You could feel something happening while he was talking to his mother. The expression given by the tape helped to realize there was an ironic twist at the end of the story.

2. The story presented is true of human nature. A person pretends he is a big shot when if fact he is only a "wash woman." In this story, Jerry pretended he was a "all-star" football player when he was only a drug store worker. He seemed to have to lie to his mom about his scholarship though to be sending money he earned by working for he helped his father recover from his illness.

   This story reminds me very much of the style in which O. Henry writes. The author, Corey Ford, employed the surprise ending technique very well. He developed the story well and left it suspended in the air, although the climax had been reached. I do like how the author can keep conversation going through only one person.

3. The story "Snake Dance" is about a boy a boy, who after going off to college, was the misfortune of having his father talken ill. Naturally the parents want their son to stay in college and are willing to pay for it, as well as the bills. Jerry realizes how his parent feel, but is going to help them all he can. He can't tell his parents that he dropped out of college to give them the money; so he tells them he won a scholarship. He takes a job to help at money for the bills and does his best to help in anyway possible without worrying his parents.

   The way the story was written is very good. You are given the impression that Jerry is a big football star right to the very end. It is only in the last paragraphs, the last two sentences that you find out the truth.

By using the telephone conversation you are given the action; but also you percieve Jerry's feelings. The harship through which he is going.
I fell that this technique was used very much and helped to make the story of more interest.

4. Because of the outdated ideas of having a milkshake ect. It seemed like a 1930 or 1940 story. Jerry didn't seem to be very strong of a character since he was calling his mom and talking about how great everything was. It seemed like he needed his mother to advice him of the fact that he was having a good and prosperous time at school. It didn't seem like a very good piece of literature. The character wasn't strong, the story was vague and there was mostly dialogue and no good scene setting or description. The dialogue left a lot to be desired for it seemed very out moded and quite trute and dull. I would recommend seventh graders to read it bit I wouldn't suggest that the older pick it up to read. It isn't worth it.

5. The story is and extremly well constructed short story. Corey Ford used dialog very effectivly to create the emotions he wanted.

   Fords story is well knot and Jerry's canoversation with his mother leads up to the suprise ending without giving away the secret, true, Ford leaves numerous hints-why is a football player smoking, why would there be a pay phone in a fraternity house and it seems rather curious him bieng so anxious about what is happening outside the phone booth.

   The only real problem with Ford's story is that it is a bit abstact. College students arent as concerned with football today as they were when the story was written. Some of the slang.

6. In this short story I found a very common plot used by many unimaginative authors. The idea of telling your parents a long lost friend or a girl you knew that you are on top of the world is very old. Even with this plot problem, the author's verb tendincy was fairly good. It averaged around seven words to each verb. He was successful in keeping away from the verb "to be."

   The imagery was excellent. I could see the author did well in instead of things. The characters were fully developed. The worrying mother, the eager to help out son and even the laidout father. However all this is hidden by the use of a stereo type plot and stereo type character.

CATEGORY III

1. I think Jerry might have been tring to pull the wool over his mothers eyes by saying he won the football game. Kids in college don't tell there mothers things like we drink beer once and a while. Kids that live in a fraternity house shouldn't have to call on a pay phone.

2. Jerry wasn't really a football player. He seemed to be wanting to impress his mother by telling her he was playing football. If he had of been playing football he shouldn't of been drinking of smoking anyway.

   When he said the crowd was yelling for him it was just the people at the counter wanting some service.

   Jerry was trying to be someone he really wasnt. which more times than not doesn't work.

3. Jerry is simply a frustrated adolescent who fears his parents' reaction to his so-called "failure." He had gone to school with the hope of becoming an accomplished & popular athlete. Unfortunately, one sees that he becomes a mere soda jerk who send his parents part of his weekly earnings.

   Perhaps Jerry fears that since his parents are already troubled, (by his fathers' illness) that he may as well not add to their hardships with a true discription of his school life. So, he calls frequently to give them "peace of mind," but in the end, who is he really deceiving?

4. Jerry worked at Semple's instead of attending college. This was probably a college town and the guys from the college came their for a place to hang around. Jerry envied the football boys and their social status. He wanted to impress his parents that he was doing well in life.

5. This is a story about a boy who goes away to college. He's a big star, all glory football player, He gets alot of attention in school. He's an "all american" boy. He is supposedly quite confident of himself.

   He calls his mother because he feels bad. He probably hasn't written or talked to his parents for a long time and he has a quilt complex.

   The big brass band is blurting out his praise and he feels rotten inside. He doesn't really like himself. He tries to convince himself that everything is O.K.. He sends money to his parents instead of love.

6. This reminds me of something O'Henry would write. He is known for his surprise endings.

   I don't know what Jerry's purpose was in lying to his mother; whether it was because he didn't want her and his father to worry about him because they had enough to worry about, or whether it was like a game he was playing on his own mind. It's like he's trying to play out his dream of being the man on campus.

7. I interpreted the story as being one about a boy named Jerry who because his father was seriously ill, went to college but instead of attending classes worked in a drug store as a soda jerk. This inabled him to send money to his parents to help pay his fathers medical bill. He lied about being on a football scholarship and being star of the team, but only to keep his parents from worrying about him. Because of this he could send his parents his tuition fees to use for medicar expenses also. He seemed like a boy who was very close to his parents and cared very much for them.

8. This story tells of a boy named Jerry and his love for his family. So his mother would have enough money he quit school and got a job. To make her happy, though, he told her that he won a scholarship and tried to not worry her. He knew that in order for there to be enough money, he would have to work. Jerry also knew that if his mother thought that he was happy that it would be one less worry.

   When he told his mother that he was popular with the guys, he wasnt really.

9. Jerry is a boy under quite some emotional stress. His father, who is apparently paralyzed somehow, has had high expectations for his son -- going to college, probably the one he went to, being in a fraternity, a certain one at that, being on the football team, a star player. While in reality he is only a soda jerk. Jerry chooses to lie to his parents so that his father's dream will not be shattered. It is possible that if Jerry told the truth his father would have a relapse. More than likely the things his father wants for Jerry were things he did in that same college. In effect, he might be trying to relive his youth thru his son. This may help his father, esp. in his condition, however it must leave permanent emotional scars on Jerry. At this time in his life, when is first really on his own, he must live with deception. His stories have tangled up his life, for Helen, "the girl

back home," apparently is unaware of the total situation and doesn't answer his letters anymore, probably because she

10. The main character in this story is playing a part which many people young and old alike -- pacification. He is so humble about sending the money to his parents his humbleness becomes a form of being ashamed; consequently, he cannot tell his parents the way in which he earned the money and the lies which are thrilling his mother are only hurting him. Although he has decided to work for the main purpose of helping his parents, his other false accomplishments aren't doing any good. He's pacifying his mother which probably is for the best but being a false hero is making things worse for him: He is compensating for his need for being needed by working at the soda shop. He would love to be a hero to others.

11. Sacrifice is the theme of this short story. Because Jerry's father is sick, with some sort of paralyzing disease, Jerry gives up the glamorous life of a college freshman. He becomes a bystander, yet so devoted to his parents and his parents wishes, he decides not to inform them of his plan of help. He constructs a web of carefully rehearsed lies...he's a football hero - won a scholarship...in a fraternity -- the one his father always wanted him to be in...has many friends and above all he's happy so his mother had nothing to worry about. Yet when the facade is ended and he hangs up the phone you see the real Jerry reflected in the mirror -- a soda jerk -- working hard to help out!

12. Snake Dance by Corey Ford is a pathetic and maybe even tragic story of a college youth. Sent to school by his parents, he is soon forced to sacrifice the personal pleasures of football social activities to take on a job to help finance his mother and sick father - making up scores of lies as he tries to reassure them that they are providing for him more than adequately.

    It's really sad that Jerry is pysologically forced to keep the truth from his parents. It shows love and gratitude for them, but despite this, it also shows a lack of trust and respect since he feels education is adding an extra burden to the family, now that his father is ill, he elects to take it upon himself to releive some of the pressure and burden from his parents. I feel that in doing this he is possibly only retarding the eventual effect which the family will encounter. True, he is temporarily keeping his parents from extra worries, and this is noble & brave of him - but if his grades should suffer, it might even hit his parents harder. They might blame themselves if their son doesn't get the education that he is capable of attaining, they might blame themselves if their son is unable to participate in football and the other social activities.

Truth, trust, respect and love are the only means for the family to succeed & overcome their ordeal.

13. The boy's parents had been saving money for him to go to college. It seemed to be a big thing with them. Jerry must have been supposed to play football at the college. Something happen to his father. He seemed to give up all he had at college to help out his Mom & Dad. They all must have been pretty proud of each other. They seemed quite independent. Jerry was pretty unselfish to give up what he did for his parents. He must have loved them an awfully lot. Going to college most probably was the biggest thing that could ever happen to him. He wanted his mother to think that he was really making good - in everything.

    The title of the story was symbolic. A Snake Dance brings to mind curves and swerves. Big Jerry telling his Mother everything he did he swerved around and around just as one would do in a Snake Dance. Jerry was like a snake evading and by passing things.

CATEGORY IV

1. This was a lousy story because it didn't say anything. It didn't make any sense. Only one thing about this story is that similar thing like this could have happened.

2. I think that this story is poor. It lacks composition. It didn't seem to have any message or importance. I also found the story stupid and on about sixth grade level.

3. I think this was very good story but a little unreal to believe. Especially about the guy who didn't drink beer because his mother told him not to. This would be a good story if there was more believe things in it.

4. It was okay but it could have been better. It was too much of him saying that he's okay and about football. And they should have had his mom talk. He sounded too much like a moma's boy.

5. I think that the story was a little bit too vivid in some parts. When they told of his lighting a cigarette and match it was not all that interesting. The story had a better ending than I thought it would. It supprised me too. From the story you would think he really was a football star. The telephone conversation isn't too intereting. I think they should have told a little background about Jerry and his family before the conversation. And I think they should have told why he led and about his dad.

6. The story I felt was a little redundant. It seemed to ramble on and on. If I were given a choice I certainly would not choose that as a reading piece. I thought the story also was a little different. I thought that Jerry was suppose to be a big football stud, but towards the end I thought he was making that up so he could not worry his mother any. The main ideas were laid out one after another making that up so he had trouble to write about this story. I didn't care for it because it was so open. I would like it better if it gave something more to think about. For reason I even think a Tale of Two Cities is better reading than this.

7. This story must be pretty old because it has a boy who actually worked to help support his parents and the fact that he lied about having a scholarship just to make his mother feel good. Of course it could be a new story written by someone who remembers when young people were wholesome. I thought that it was a bad story because it was unrealistic with a predictable ending. However, it is somewhat interesting to know what some people thought college was like. I must admit that Jerry had admirable qualities but I'm afraid that they just wouldn't be very good in these times.

8. Snake Dance by Corey Ford

The title of this story seemed to have little to do with the story. Possibly by using vague odds and ends the title could be tied in the story but English teachers are better at that then I so I'll leave it for them. The story itself has a suprise in it in the way it ends, but is not so different from the hundreds of stories like it that it can't be seen through before one reaches the end of it. In all the story seems to be reworked re-work of the same old story of boy leaves home, writes and says he's doing fine and is really slaving for peanuts. Little worth the effort to read it as much better stories have been written with the same idea.

9. I thought this was a terrible story because I could see the end coming about a mile away. It was too obvious.

Jerry sounds like some sort of martyr. I assume he comes from a small town and that the school is in Dover, Delaware. His mother seems terribly naive but I suppose Mr. Ford would explain that by her preoccupation with Jerry's father. His family must come from a small town if she can believe a story like that. She must have not an idea about money or college life. The family must be terribly poor probably has little or no insurance because $12 wouldn't make much difference if they did have it. My intelligence is insulted by being asked to read this story. It is more for about sixth grader. That ends discussion of the story, but not my discussion of this test. I think you people should listen to Silberman and Holt instead of wasting time with this. How do you know half of us don't feel sick or were just kidding you on these answers. I also resent this dehumanization getting instructions from a machine.

10. Like many authors, Corey Ford tried to surprise the reader with an ironic ending. Yet, whether the author knew it or not, this story appeared to be a run-of-the-mill tale of "American Life." "Utterly boring."

Good old Jerry. He's doing all he can for dear old dad. Isn't that touchy? Touchy, yes, but interesting, no.

Nowadays a more fitting picture would show Jerry pushing dope or something to make money for dad. Maybe he might have stolen. The way medical bills are today, working at the "drug store" couldn't pay for the doctor's carfare.

I'm not sure when this was written but it must have been about 1930-1940. The dialogue on the phone killed me. "Mom", "pop", "Gee-whiz", and all of that business is plain garbage.

Authors like Corey Ford keep up the American tradition "Apple pie and Doris Day". Sorry, but that's not my piece of cake. Need I say more?

11. The story itself is rather simple and has little relation to anything, but that isn't necessarily a fault. In this case, however, it is. The story that is the plot is the only thing which might save this composition from the state of complete worthlessness. The dialogue, which comprises most of the story, is quite contrived, not realistic at all. The plot is also contrived to some extent. It is an interesting coincidence that the crowd does not reveal what Jerry has been doing until he hangs up.

Another of this story's faults is that the author does not leave anything to the reader's imagination and this is one of the main advantages of a book. This story might as well be on television. The author describes Jerry's every move his tone of voice, his feelings. These are things which should be left partially to the reader.

In conclusion, you might have chosen a better piece of writing by which to evaluate own itelligence.

12. The title of this passage does not seem to be in accordance with the contents. It is the story of a boy away from home but who is deeply interested in his family and in helping them. He is one of those Joe-college, all American types, right on down to the milk shakes. I think that this is the type of American that the silent majority would like all college student to be like. Someone who accepts everything as it is and doesn't try to change it for the others. He is a character I bet coming back to the 20's. You could just see this crew-cut, bobby socks, and saddle shoes. The only realistic thing in it is the service that he recieved on the telephone. Horrible. Everything today in this country is out of order or if not slow at work. This seems to be written by one of Mr. Nixons men who worked like to see all American boy and girls behave in this way.

CATEGORY V

1. This story is about a young man in College. He receaved a schoolarship for his football and is doing well. His father has now become sick. Unfortunately his father cannot move his arms.

   The son is calling from a fraternity phone booth to check on his fathers condition. But evidently there is no change, even though the family has the best medical attention.

2. This story is about a boy named Jerry who one day called his mother and told her everything was alright and that he was living at the fraternity house where his father wanted him to go to. While he was talking to his mother, she asked him how he was and said she would send him money, but he wouldn't let her because his father was being laid off. His mother seemed to be worried about her son, just like all mothers would with their children. He couldn't talk to her a long time because there was going to be a celebration for him because he made the points for the football game. So he told his mother to say hello to everyone especially Helen and explain to her why he couldn't '

3. Jerry is calling his Mom at home. He's trying to concience her that he's o.k. and that he's a football student. He goes on to say that he made two touchdowns at the game. He even tells her that he's in his dad's old fraternity. He's trying to make his mother believe he's ok so she won't worry about him. She has enough trouble to worry about without trying to worry about Jerry also. In reality Jerry really works in the Malt shop at Semple's as a founation boy. He's sending her his money he makes at Semple's to help pay for the doctor bills.

   He doesn't play football nor does he live in the fraternity house.

   He tells his mother that he has to go because the kids needed him and because he doesn't want her to find out about what he was really doing. The story closes when he hangs up to serve the kids.

4. Jerry, a freshman at Dover was calling home to see how his ill father and his family were doing. On the phone he tried to make himself sound important to his mother, by telling her he recieved a scholarship and he's a big hero in todays game with Alvord. While he's waiting for everyone to come in to Semple's he tells her he's with a fraternity, the one his dad wanted him to join, and they have a blast all the time. Jerry tells his mother he's going to send her money each week so his father can see a specialist and that he can get by with his scholarship money. During his conversation everyone comes in the drug store and hollers for him. With this he tries again to prove himself important to his mother. Then he hangs up the phone and moves over toward the counter, in reality Jerry is just a drug store counter boy working so he can stay in college and help his father to become better again.

5. Jerry had been away at college, and calls his mom on the phone, and tells her all these things about him help win the football game and that he's a big man on the school campass. His father had been ill and he been working at this drugstore named Semple, to send back money to help them out. He says he got a scholarship and doesn't need the money his mom and Dad had saved for his college education. His mom think he really big at college, but he not, he working to help them out. The crowd is really shouting, "Jerry! Milk Shake, Jerry!" His mom thinks there are shouting for him because of the game. The drug store has a band and he lets his mother here the band and she really think he's so popular, but he has on this jacket that the name Semple's stiched on it in red letters and a white caps.

He tells his mom to tell Helen, he sorry he couldn't take her to the freshman dance but that how things goes.

6. Jerry is a freshman away from home at college. One evening after a football game he calls home to Centerville, Ohio to his mother. He has trouble at first putting the call through.

   Through their conversation it is learned that Jerry's father has been hurt and is possibly paralyzed Jerry has sent money home to his mother to help her out because he doesn't need it due to his football scholarship. He tells his mother he's in a fraternity and is quite popular with the kids - they even call him by his first name. He adds that he'll be sending ten or twelve dollars home each week to help her out.

   The crowd has come up around the drugstore now. Jerry says he has to go now because since he made two touchdowns they'll want him to have a soda with them. He hangs up, telling his mother to assure his father everything's all right.

   As he steps out of the phone booth away from the world he has painted for his parents, he comes back to reality - a job at a drugstore soda fountain where he works hard to help with his fathers hospital bill.

7. Jerry was trying to call his mother and it took him a long time to get through to her. He was in a phone booth, smoking a cigaret. Finally he got through to his mother. He asked how his dad was doing. His mother asked why he sent back some money and he told her he had got a scholarship for football and he didn't need the money they had saved for college. He told his mother that he was living in a fraternity house. He told her that he had played in a game that day and scored two touchdowns and they were going down to Semple's drugstore for a milkshake. He asked his mother to explain to Helen why he couldn't ask her to the freshman dance. After he hung up he stepped out of the booth and looked in the mirror behind the soda fountain and saw his reflection with his white hat, white jacket with "Semple's" on the pocket and the crowd yelling for milkshakes. He had lied to his mother.

CATEGORY VI

1. Jerry was a big shot bartender at a drug store and he thinks that he plays football. The guy that owns the place even gives him a jacket. He sits around his frat all night getting poted. Unlike most college students he likes

his parents. I wonder what the real reason is for him not taking Helen to the freshman dance. He was probably at a drive in movie or maybe he was drunk.

He should of dialed direct, it saves money. I wonder what his father thinks.

2. "No, you guys I've got plenty on my mind right now. "Hay there Jerry where are ya going? This is being asked to Jerry as he dashes out the door. He dashes his way across town into his small 3 room apartment. More nervous than he's ever felt himself he gathers his clothes together and leaves $25 on the dresser paying for the rent. He made his way to the highway and hottled himself just far enought to a small town. Vander where no one knew him. The first thing was to get a plan to stay and then he began to write letters to the dean of his school, a drug store owner by the college and his mom. After mailing the letters he began to go in every place in the town to get a job.

3. Snake Dance is our school band for the football team. They play for us everytime we win or lose. Ever man likes their music when I called her today she sounded great. Pop's not getting better but things like that take time. He should be able to use his arms in a year or more. Every week I send mom ten dollars to help her out a little. Just until Pop's better. This weekend I think I'll go see mom and dad. They'll be glad to see me. I'll leave on the bus tonight. I should arrive at nine thirty. Boy, this bus sure is crowded. After I found a seat I sat down and started reading the newspaper. After riding four hours we finally got to my home town. It still looks the same even the old school house is still here. I thought they's wreck it.

   Well here's my home after knocking three times mom answers. John oh John it's so good to see you. What a pleasant. Why didn't you call me and tell me that you were coming home. Pj O wanted to suprise you. You sure did. Come in, sit down. How's dad. Oh he's fine. Let's go see him to night, okay.

   Hello Dad, son come here. How are you? I am fine dad. How are you. Great, couldn't be better.

4. You sit down with the rushing in your head, the spinning, ugly words and uselessness. Falling down, over, off. Holding on hidden in last moments, stand with head in hand.

Eyes peeling about, out of focuses, hurting. Hurt and sweating, frightened animal, frightened into anger. charges, kills, hides Freedom, kindly, loving, holds thy head to her tender white breast. feel the gentleness of love? even thou, lowest of base animals, is transformed to beauty in love's eyes. feel it come softly. feel the shudder of anticipation? tenderness prevails, although it be a cunning plot.

5. John started his car he took off with a squeal. It was his first wreck the guy hadn't stop on the stop sign. The men blamed John of course the police would believe the man because he was rich and I wasn't. I had only been back a two days how lucky can you get--would rather be back over there in Viet Nam. I had more friends there then here.

   The right front bumper smashed it probably cost $150. I can get it fixed for $75 and now my insurance will sky-rocket. Money, money that all people want and I thought quitting school and then going to the servic would be alright. I think I'll go back and if I get married I won't let my kids quit school. It pays to stay in school.

6. Instead of comenting on your story I've selected to tell you about a 17 year old kid who was told not asked that he was going to participate in a survoy.

   No one enlightened him on the purpose of this survay; or even who was talking it. He wasn't even sure it was a survey, he just made the assumption that is what it was.

   Now this person being to obstinate character that he is decided he would show his displeasure by showing a note to the people responsible.

7. I guess we're supposed to write something about the story? And "discuss the story". Well he very nervous - I gathered about his dad who is laid up. Anyway why should I discuss the story? It's all right there and you want to know how I read. Well for one thing I don't believe all these people were picked at random. Out of 2400 people? - me and two other people from my second hour. Do you have me classed as "left-handed, Anglo Saxon, Protestant, average income family of five from rural area. Well I'm different than any of these other people they're all writing about some dialogue you or one of your fellow - pshycialrists (?) (is that what you are?) Besides what can you get from those stupid questions. Nor one (probably) knew about the picture, I had some vague ideas but I thought you wanted us to be truthful. - so I put I don't know. Anyway if you're assessing educational progress -

thats what's on the pencil - maybe I should tell you some things. But then that's for you to find out from all those questions. And to back up my saying I'm not "random" I swapped booklets with the guy behind me. (He's black.) Not really bit I guess you can check the numbers on the corner of the booklet to find out. Its been a gas taking you're test. I got out of "team taught" History. I suppose you know what that is but you ought check into it. Bye-Bye and good-luck on the others.

CATEGORY VII

1. I don't thing this is a very good poem and I don't know how to write a compossion.

   This poem is about the way a man feals about something.

2. In this story, the boy, Jerry pretends to his mother in order to make her feel better. His father is obviously very sick and he tells her he is a real jock and getting on very well at college to make her feel better.

   I think he does this to make his mother not worry about him when she has so much to worry about already. He tells her he will send her money even when he doesn't seem to be in too good a financial situation either. It seems kind of odd that he puts up a big pretense and makes himself out to be a football hero and very popular when he is in reality a soda jerk! By keeping up the front he has to back out on things (like asking Helen to the dance) so that he can keep up the image for his mother.

   At the end of the story I found myself wondering what would happen if his mother ever found out and if he could ever keep it a complete secret from her.

   The story itself sort of preshadowed the ending but you didn't really know what the ending would be. It keeps you interested and makes you wonder what is going on until the very end when it impacts.

## Results for Adults

In general, adults were more receptive to the story than 17-year-olds were. More of them accepted Jerry and his situation without criticism of the author or the story's sentimentality.

About 8% of the papers were engagement-involvement responses in which the writer "moralized" about the story or otherwise approached it from a personal point of view (see Exhibit 16). Half the papers were rated adequate or superior.

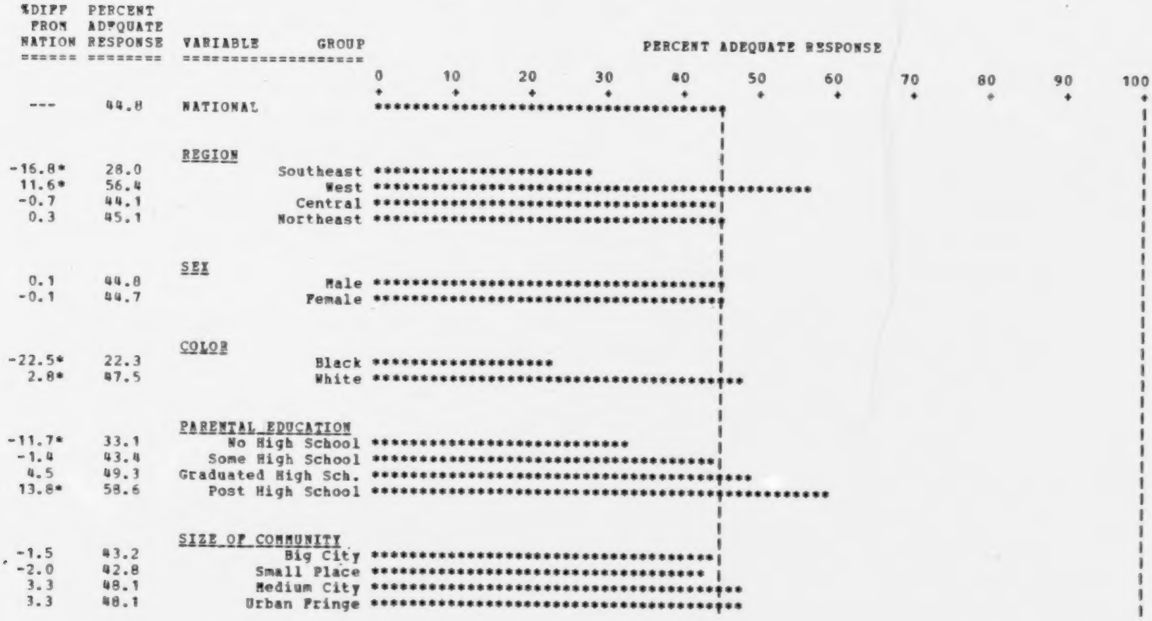
As at age 17, fewer than 2% of the adults wrote essays that were primarily formalistic. However, more than two-thirds of the essays (69%) were interpretive. Greater than national percentages of interpretive essays appeared for the graduated-from-high-school parental education category (75%) and the big-city-fringe DOC group (77%). As at age 17, the majority of Category III compositions indulge in character analyses of one sort or another, and more than half received adequate or superior ratings.

Only 2% of the adults' essays were evaluative and most of these were far less critical of the story than the 17-year-olds were.

Sixteen percent of the adults paraphrased or in some way retold the story; in the Southeast the proportion was 24%. Two-thirds of the retellings were rated inadequate or barely adequate because the writers misread the story and missed the irony.

There were very few Category VI, VII or VIII essays.

Exhibit 18. Percentages of Adequate Essays
(Rating 3 or 4)



```
%DIFF  PERCENT
 FROM  ADEQUATE
NATION RESPONSE VARIABLE       GROUP
====== ======== ===================

  ---    44.8   NATIONAL

                REGION
-16.8*   28.0            Southeast
 11.6*   56.4                 West
 -0.7    44.1              Central
  0.3    45.1            Northeast

                SEX
  0.1    44.8                 Male
 -0.1    44.7               Female

                COLOR
-22.5*   22.3                Black
  2.8*   47.5                White

                PARENTAL EDUCATION
-11.7*   33.1       No High School
 -1.4    43.4     Some High School
  4.5    49.3  Graduated High Sch.
 13.8*   58.6     Post High School

                SIZE OF COMMUNITY
 -1.5    43.2             Big City
 -2.0    42.8          Small Place
  3.3    48.1          Medium City
  3.3    48.1         Urban Fringe
```

Exhibit 18 reveals that 45% of the adults' compositions were rated at least adequate. The percentage was much greater for the West (56%) and for the post-high-school parental education group (59%). It was also reliably greater for Whites as a group.

The percentage of adequate responses was 17 points below the national figure for the Southeast, 23 points below for the Blacks and 12 points below for the no-high-school group.

Sample adult essays appear on the following pages, prefaced by these scoring observations.

CATEGORY I. Sample 1 is a typical I-2 response; numbers 2, 3 and 4 all reflect a primarily subjective response to the story which characterizes "engagement-involvement" essays.

II. The samples treat the story as a formal object, written in order to prompt certain emotions in the reader. Though they all contain elements of other categories, this detached approach characterizes them as "perception" essays primarily devoted to answering the question: "What is the nature of the work?"

III. Most interpretive responses were so categorized because people attempted to analyze Jerry's character in various ways (why he lies, why he's so nervous, how he probably feels about his father and mother, etc.). Attempts to descry a moral to the story also fall into this category. Inadequate responses either had no explanation for Jerry's behavior or explained it incorrectly. Samples 1 and 2 are minimally acceptable; 3-5 are acceptable, and 6-11 are superior interpretive responses to the story.

IV. There were not as many evaluative responses among the adults as among 17-year-olds and those there were at this age were not as critical of the story. All 6 samples, beginning with a minimal judgment and moving up to acceptable evaluations with stated criteria, deal in some way with the interest, effect or worth of the story.

V. In this category (retelling, or paraphrase), V-1's were factually incorrect and/or radically incomplete; 2's were factually correct and somewhat complete synopses which missed the irony--i.e., retold the story as if Jerry really were a football hero, fraternity man, etc. (Samples 1-3); 3's retold the story, indicating that Jerry was lying to his mother (Samples 4-6); and 4's were very complete synopses which accurately paraphrased the story with cogency and understanding (Sample 7).

V-3's and 4's were distinguished from III-3's and 4's by their omission of any significant explanations of Jerry's behavior or generalizations about the implications of his actions or the overall meaning of the story. Such remarks as "He sends money home to help his folks," or "He didn't want his mom to worry," or "He was concerned about his dad," were not considered sufficiently 'interpretive' to warrant putting the whole response into Category III, especially when it was clear that the writer's overall intent was simply to repeat the story as he heard it.

VI. Sometimes there are unusual responses that do not fit any one category particularly well, or are funny, or are just plain bizarre. These few generally wind up in Category VI rated 1, 2, 3, or 4. There are no samples of these because adults seem to write fewer unusual essays than the teenagers do.

VI-6, "creative" responses, were also rare, but three samples have been provided.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "SNAKE DANCE"

### Adults

### CATEGORY I

1. The story reminded me of a few people I know. The kind that are really able to accomplish just about anything but they would much rather pracrastinate.

2. It is good for a young man to accept the responsibility of helping his parent but not if it requires him to lie to his parents. If he quit school because of his fathers'

illness, he should of gone home and talked it over with them. If he quit school because he didn't make it in football, it would of been better for him to go and tell them because they will find out he isn't playing sooner or later. I think it will hurt his parents more when they discover he lied than to know he couldn't make his grades or that he wasn't a good football player.

3. Jerry is away at college and working in a soda fountain. Perhaps he isn't even going to college. Anyway he sends money to his parents. He is very concerned because his father is ill and maybe dying. Both the mother and the son are each concerned about the other and willing to sacrifice for the other's welfare. Its quite a poignant story. My parents did the same for me although the conditions weren't as dramatic and I was a little more self-centered and less appreciative than Jerry seems to be.

4. The man was nervous and high strung. He was very interested in telling about his success. Very confident in himself he wanted to let everybody know that success was always with him. Success can help some people but often it ruins because they don't know how to accept it. This man was very nervous because the situation was more than he could handle. The excitement will soon get the best of him. Over excitement will soon damage a man's physical condition. How ever people need a certain amount of excitement to keep them going.

   Everybody needs something interesting to happen in their life. If nothing out of the ordinary never happens to people they lose their desire to live.

CATEGORY II

1. Story is about a boy calling home. He talks to his mother about his life at college, explaining his activities at school. Last of story shows that he is not a student but an employee of Samples Drugstore.

   The story is written to convey a sense of nervousness and apprehension on the part of Jerry in making his call. Author sets this mood by having Jerry go through a great deal of trouble in making connections.

   From the story, one explanation might be that Jerry had been a student but for some reason, his father's illness perhaps he is no longer in school, a fact he does not want his parents to find out.

2. This story of a young man's altruistic efforts to help his parents in their time of need is what might be called a "tear-jerker". The author tries to play on the emotional appeal of fillial love and loyalty, and does so quite well. The young man's effort is to help his parents financially without hurting them emotionally. To do so he tries to make them picture him as a success both in school and in sports, while he works at a soda fountain and sends any spare money to his parents.

   The situation described is one which most people can appreciate because of some extra effort made at some time to keep from hurting some loved one who was already suffering some form of pain. The need of men for emotional relief from such stresses can often be eased by such stories.

3. The author's intent became apparent with the use of the approaching band, plus the call being made from the outdoor phone booth. The pace of the writing (conversation) increased with the sounds of the snake dance, as well as the interesting of both.

   Little joy was apparent with the boys' conversation. I was left wondering how long he would be able to keep up his cover.

4. This is essentially a vignette dealing with a young man keeping up a brave front for his parents and perhaps his own benefit.

   He has evidently quit, or beed expelled from college; belonged neither to fraternity nor team and is simply subsisting meagerly as a soda jerk.

   There's a certain poignance in this kind of tale of failure unaccepted and/or acknowledged and also an implied criticum of a society, a family which places a premium on success (generally dubious successes). The young man's guilt and longing would, were his values more substantine and his goals loftier, be the elements of tragedy. As it is, however, they are simply pathotic - grist for country - western ballards or bar room lamentations in his declining years.

CATEGORY III

1. It is a very sad story about a boy who is working his way through college and trying to help his parents at the same time not letting them know that he really can't afford it. And trying to build his life into something it really isn't.

2. The father is sick, the boy is away at college. He seems to be homesick, He probably has a job after classes so to help with expensives. He is hiding his true feelings from his mom to keep her from worrying. He is the type of boy I hope mine to be someday. It is a warm and sad story.

3. Using a long distance telephone conversation between a boy and his mother, this story portrays a boy who has given up his chance for an education and pleasant college life in order to work and send money to his parents. He has done this because his father has become ill, probably with a stroke, and is incapacitated.

   Not only does he give up his opportunity to go to school he also conceals his disappointment and what must be his mother's disappointment by lying about what he is actually doing. He says that his money comes from a football scholarship and a job given by the alummi, he brags about his football success, but in fact he is working as a soda jerk.

4. Jerry is a freshman at Dover University. He comes from a small town and a family that is definitely not well to do. His father has always dreamed of his son attending college and that is the only reason Jerry is a student there. The boy is sensitive and thoughtful and right now is very worried about his father's health and finances. He has invented the story of being a football star and fraternity member so that he will have an alibi for the extra money he is earning. His only concern is for his parents and that he will be able to help them out financially by working as a soda jerk. He hopes they will never find out what he is doing for them.

5. Jerry seemed nervous at the thought of even calling home. Maybe because of the pretense he wanted to follow.

Apparently he has not been as socially accepted as he had hoped. Mother seemed to be having enough problems and so he didn't burden her with his. He seemed concerned about home and maybe even missed the "good life" there.

No football hero, no "college job", but maybe just a "guy" struggling to get through college with having anyone know the horror of it all.

6. A young man away from home in a college town is concerned about the health of his father. To ease the worries of his mother as well as his family's financial strain in this time of crisis he sends money home under the guise of being a college football star. And in the telephone conversation, he builds up his hero image while in reality he is earning his way by being a soda jerk. Obviously, he is not the successful sports' figure and fraternity man that he would like his family to think that he is and that he would like to be himself.

7. Jerry, a college student and the main character in Snake Dance has taken a job as a soda jerk to help support himself and his family. His father has suffered an illness that has caused the lost of muscular control. Very nervously he contacts his mother to inquire about his fathers condition. Jerry's nervousness may be due to the fact that he has to lie to his mother concerning his financial and social status. To relieve his mother he invents a set of circumstances that he believes would justify his ability to send small amounts of money home weekly.

   To complecate Jerry's life he may be lossing the girl he left at home. He is unable to complete prior engagements with her and she seems to be reacting unfavorably.

8. Young adults want so very much to have purpose, be respected and to be popular. Jerry may have gone to college with such dreams of glory. Whatever the case, he apparently wasn't able to live up to such ambitions. He seemed very thoughtful of his mother and father. He wanted to lighten their burdens but he unfortunately picked an untruthful way of doing so. A lie, however innocent, can only leave a person with uneasiness. I felt Jerry was witnessing such discomfort, but instead of being able to turn to strong parents for help, it seemed they needed to feel and know he was doing well and was happy because of immediate problems of their own.

9. This boy was trying to satisfy his mother's desires that he should go on to college be a football hero and popular with all his peers.

   He was not ready to disappoint his mother's dream at this time especially since his father was ill and she had other concerns.

   The boy felt a sense of duty to his parents since he sent them money and continues to do so.

   This is a typical story of a parent who cannot face the fact that maybe her son is not what she hoped and dreamed that he would be. Either ambition, ability, intelligence or maturity level of the boy made it impossible for him to fulfill her dreams. Yet his love for her makes him want to protect her from the truth.

10. Snake Dance recounts the desperate attempt of a young man away from home to reassure himself and his parents that he is doing fine. He appears nervous, lonely and insecure as he uses bravado and false gaity to assure his mother that life has never been better. Behind this facade the reader can perceive that he is actually homesick, in need of money and not at all the favorite football player he pretends to be. His concern for his sick father and apprehension about the future he covers with assurances to his mother and by sending money home which he can probably ill-afford. Probably his masquerade is used as much to fool himself as them.

CATEGORY IV

1. It was a nice story. It had a lot of feeling in it. It was ok.

2. The beginning leaves a person very vague as to what the story is about. Evidently the son's father is ill and he is concerned about him and also a little homesick at the same time. As to my impression of the story, I don't really understand how the author chose the title. I can't really see any relation between it and the story, and it was really very blab.

3. The story is awfully difficult to remain interested in. The ending is almost expected not a surprise. The way he talks, you can tell he is building himself up so he won't feel so bad about not being able to remain in school. He is to be admired for his faithfulness to his parents which seems to be the point of the whole story.

4. This is the story of Jerry. Jerry is an extremely sensitive boy who is very concerned about his father (and his mother) who has a health problem.

   Jerry has not been factual to his mother about playing football and a school scholarship in an attempt not to worry his mother.

   Jerry is concerned about his family's finances and is sending money for them to live on. He has done this by working at a drug store "Samples".

   I think this is a well presented story showing the sensitivities of a young man. The story moves well and is retaining an interest. I like the progression, word usage and message.

5. Excellent monoloque - Jerry's mother could almost be heard talking to him. This story is like several Depression Age shorts I've read over the years: Jerry is a boy whose parents saved and sacrificed to put him through college, and now that his father is ill, Jerry is trying to pay back his debt. Yet, he does not want his parents to find out that his story of a football scholarship is only a cover for a soda jerk job he has taken to raise money to send home.

   A delightful story - but one that is somewhat out of date with today's younger generation.

6. The composition "Snake Dance" was effective in that it was suspenseful - who was ill? what was he really doing on campus - yet the clues were mounting and fit. It was a poignant drama, revealed through hearing one side of the telephone conversation, that of Jerry. We learn Jerry's parents saved money for him to attend college. Jerry, learning of his father's accident (we assume, accident) returned the money with a letter saying he didn't need it, that he won a football scholarship. He is deluding his parents, getting estanged from his girl, as he follows the dictates of his conscience by working as a soda jerk. The composition could be the springboard for discussion; evaluating his relationship with his family, the merit of his decision, probable outcomes. From the beginning fumbling telephone connection, it was easy to identify with Jerry.

CATEGORY V

1. This is a story of a boy calling home and checking with his mother to find out how his father is doing. The

boy also tells his mother how find and how much he likes the school.

2. This story about Jerry is letting us know of how bad Jerry feels about his present condition and wants to hide it from his parents. He calls home and finds out that his father is suffering from a heart attack. He is very concern over his condition but wanted to let his mother know that he is not worried and is having a good time and being a very successful student and athletic with no financial worries.

3. Its about the telephone conversation of a boy named Jerry, who is talking to his mother. He starts asking about his father who seems to be sick and then he tells her that he is living free of cost in a fraternity room because he is a football player and he is getting a scholarship too, on account of that. Then he tells that he would be sending $10.00 every week for the family as his father is being laid off the job. He also tells his mother to tell Helen (his girl friend) about the circumstances due to which he could not take her to a dance. He did it because she has not replied to his last letter. Then he let his mother hear the cheering crowds (for him) as they have won the football match and then he hangs up.

4. This boy was trying to convince his mom that everything was the way they wanted it to be with him in college when actually he was working at a soda fountain and sending some of his money home each week to help out with his ill father.

5. Jerry is away at college and places a long distance telephone call to his mother. It's a football weekend at school and the usual victory march and post-game celebrations are getting under way. Jerry's been concerned about his father who's suffered a heart attack recently and he wants to help the family financially as well.

   After inquiring nervously of his father's condition Jerry does his best to assure his mother that everything is fine with him at school. He particularly mentions his football accomplishments, because of which he claims he is able to send money home regularly. With his football scholarship and his life at the fraternity house he doesn't seem to have a worry in the world. Even during his telephone call, he appears to be much in demand as people keep calling for him. Jerry maybe pulling the wool over his mother's eyes however, as we discover finally that rather than a big football hero, Jerry is so much in demand because he is simply a soda-jerk at the local hang-out.

6. This story is about a young college boy who is calling home to talk with his mother about his father's convalescence. Jerry tells his mother that he is a football star but he is really working at an ice cream store part time in order that he can send his mother some money to help her while his father is ill. He reassures his mother that all is well and that he is doing very well at school and behaving himself.

7. First of all Jerry was not in school the day of the snake dance he could not stand out side for he had to work. So while people were standing outside watching the Snake Dance he decided to call up his mother and see how everybody was. He had a little difficulty getting a hold of his mom, he was very nervous. First he thought he heard his mom but it was the operation so he lit a cigarette while he was waiting. When he finally got to talk to her, he told her all about how he was on the football team and the dorm where he lived and how him and the guys went out for beer. He told his mom that he didn't need all the money her and pop saved for him to go to college, and that he would send them ten or twelve dollars week. He asked his mom to tell Helen he was sorry he didn't ask her to the Prom like he wanted to but with school and football he just couldn't. He thought Helen was mad cause she hadn't answered his last letter. He told his mom to take care of herself and he'll talk to her later, and then said good-bye.

CATEGORY VI

1. I only had two minutes and seventy five cents, I dropped the coins into the phone, so I could spend the two minutes, saying hello to mom before the big rush started. Mom thought I was a big football player on campus but really I was only a soda jerk at the Campus Hut.

   I told mom hello, and that I would send her the money she needed so badly for dad's operation, as I hung up the phone, and started back to my malt machines, I slowly uncrossed my fingers, praying that was the last time I would have to lie to mom.

2. In to the sky the clouds blow
   They may look down and the ground
   Still the clouds are very low,
   But it still just looks around

3. Jerry didn't stay with the school for very long. His dad was real sick and he went to be with his mother.

> However all of Jerry's friends missed him since he was a hero for their team. After leaving this school he got another scholarship and was a lot closer to home.

## Age Comparisons

The distribution of essays throughout the categories was very much the same at both age levels. However, the proportion of interpretive responses was greater at the adult level and the proportion of retellings was somewhat smaller. This indicates that the adults tended to look for the story's meaning more often than the 17-year-olds did.

At both age levels the Southeast, Blacks, and the lowest parental education group received fewer adequate scores than did the nation as a whole. Whites and people in the post-high-school parental education category had higher than national percentages of good essays. At age 17 there was a 15 point sex difference but among adults no difference at all appeared. As has happened throughout the literature report, Western adults performed significantly better than all adults.

## Exercise R208

Ages 17, Adult
Objective II

Write a composition in which you discuss this poem. We are more interested in what you have to say than in how you say it.

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.*

A. E. Housman, 1890

Exhibit 19. Percentages of Essays in Each Category

| Age | Category | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | II | III | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII |
| 17 | 2.8 | 1.1 | 86.3 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 2.6 | + | 1.5 |
| Adult | 9.0 | .7 | 80.9 | 1.0 | 2.5 | 1.6 | + | 2.7 |

This early A. E. Housman poem appears in the 1890 edition of A Shropshire Lad. Though it is quite straightforward it can easily be misread. The scorers decided that recognition of its metaphorical dimension was a prerequisite for an intelligent and sensitive reading and a virtual necessity for any viable interpretation. They scored as barely adequate all purely literal readings of the poem, i.e., those which missed the metaphorical nature of the "far country," the "land of lost content," and the "happy highways," or assumed that "air that kills" referred to pollution or mustard gas. These literal approaches to the poem are misreadings because they treat the poem as if it were a prose statement and because none of them can account for the entire poem.

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Scorers operated upon the assumption that the poem (any poem, in fact) does not mean whatever anyone wants it to mean; words have very definite meanings and poems create contexts for words that even further delimit their possibilities. It is true that the poem exploits several different connotations of a word at once ("spires" here refers to both real spires and mental ones, but it also plays with the root of the word "aspirations")--but different meanings of this sort are not contradictory; rather, they exist harmoniously at different levels of our reading experience and they intensify the total impact of the poem, enriching its meaning, not making more interpretations possible.

The general constellation under which all adequate interpretations fall is Separation-Nostalgia-Reminiscence. A speaker is looking back upon an earlier phase of his life (physical, mental, spiritual) and regretting its passing. Whatever he or she is separated from--youth, innocence, contentment, happiness, all of them--he cannot regain it. The air that blows is a special kind of air (some people identified it as Time) that deadens the memories, prevents contentment, makes the "heart" ache, and will ultimately kill the body. It was not necessary for a writer to make all these points to secure an adequate rating, but it was necessary to make some of them.

## Results for 17-Year-Olds

Three percent of the 17-year-olds did not write anything in response to the poem. About the same percentage wrote engagement-involvement responses, though the proportion was a bit higher for the Central region (4%). Only 1% of the papers dealt primarily with the formal qualities of the poem.

Nationally, 86% of the compositions were interpretive, but for females the figure was 89% and for the post-high-school group it was 92%. About 18% received adequate or superior ratings--in other words, about one in every five interpretive responses attended in some way to the metaphorical language; the remainder either did not or did so very briefly. The percentage of adequate interpretive responses was higher than the national figure for the Central region (20%), for females (22%), the suburban fringe (21%), and for the post-high-school category (26%).

Fifty-one percent of the compositions were rated III-2: i.e., barely adequate interpretive responses. Within that category and rating were put all "pollution" and "war" responses.

Eleven and a half percent of the 17-year-olds believed the poem was about pollution. This interpretation was most popular among Blacks (17%) and teenagers attending inner city schools (19%). Though a certain percentage of readers will always misinterpret a poem because they approach the language on a literal level alone, it is interesting that so many misinterpreted it in the same way. Pollution has been played up by the mass media for several years now and it appears that some 17-year-olds would prefer to discuss it than to discuss the poem.

Four percent of the 17-year-olds indicated that the speaker of the poem was a returning Viet Nam war veteran. In the Central region the figure was 6%. Most of these interpretations seem to have been arrived at through a sensitivity to the tone of the poem and a literal reading of "far country."

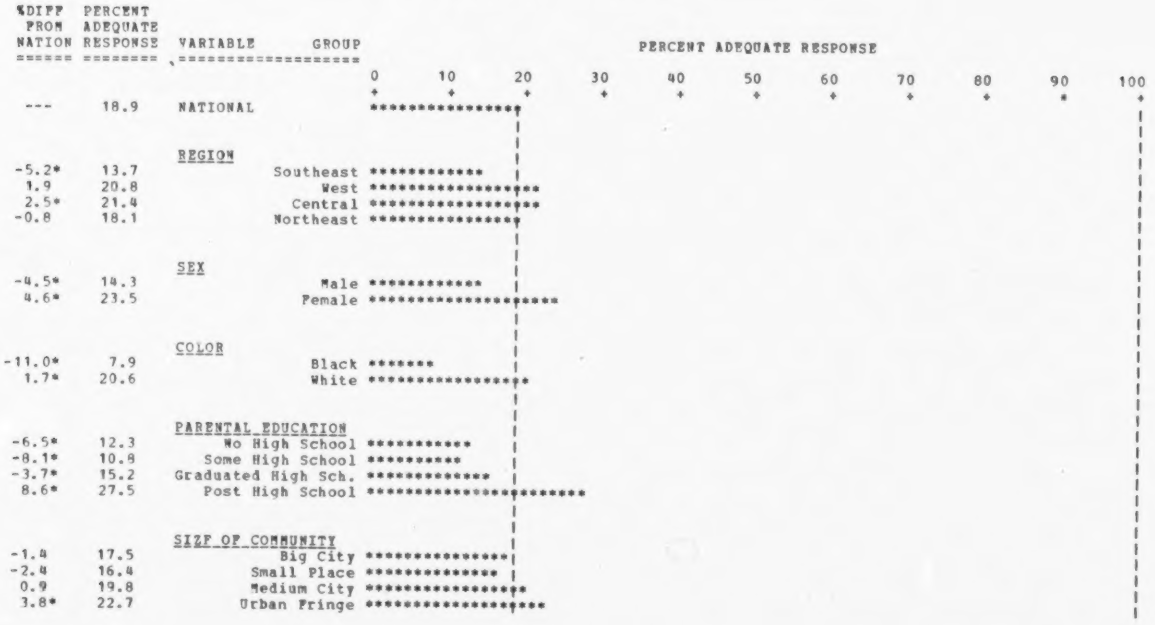
Other III-2 responses proposed that the poem prophesied the downfall of materialistic cultures, that it was about cancer of the lungs or about "the slaughter on America's highways."

Only 1% of the essays were evaluative, though for some-high-school group the figure was 2.7%. These essays were about evenly split between favorable and unfavorable reactions to the poem.

Retellings were rare because it was difficult to paraphrase the poem without making some prior interpretive judgment about it.

Though the percentage of unusual responses was 2.6% for the nation, it was 6.4% for Black 17-year-olds. About one-fourth of these were "creative," and the remainder consisted of literal transcriptions, totally unrelated digressions and unintelligible responses.

Exhibit 20. Percentages of Adequate Essays
(Rating 3 or 4)



| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 18.9 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -5.2* | 13.7 | | Southeast |
| 1.9 | 20.8 | | West |
| 2.5* | 21.4 | | Central |
| -0.8 | 18.1 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| -4.5* | 14.3 | | Male |
| 4.6* | 23.5 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -11.0* | 7.9 | | Black |
| 1.7* | 20.6 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -6.5* | 12.3 | | No High School |
| -8.1* | 10.8 | | Some High School |
| -3.7* | 15.2 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 8.6* | 27.5 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -1.4 | 17.5 | | Big City |
| -2.4 | 16.4 | | Small Place |
| 0.9 | 19.8 | | Medium City |
| 3.8* | 22.7 | | Urban Fringe |

Exhibit 20 presents the national and group percentages of adequate or better essays. Five variable categories show percentages greater than the national figure of 19%: the Central region (21%), females (24%), Whites (21%), the post-high-school group (28%) and the urban fringe (23%).

Males, Blacks, Southeasterners and the three lower parental education groups all received smaller percentages of adequate ratings than all 17-year-olds.

Following are some sample responses, preceded by scoring observations about them.

CATEGORY I. Note how the samples all seem to have elements of other categories in them; yet they all reflect, in different ways, a preoccupation with the effect of the poem upon the writer. This distinguishes them as engagement-involvement responses.

Sample 4 could be categorized as VI-7, but some scorers felt that it was intended to be a very personal expression of the student's response to the poem. Whatever the case, it is a good example of a certain type of response that this scoring system cannot fully accommodate.

II. There were few of these. Sample 1 is a weak formal response; 2 and 3 are stronger.

III. Samples 1-13 illustrate the variety in the III-2 responses. In this group scorers put all wrong, vague, undeveloped, and unsupported interpretive efforts.

Samples 6-8 are "pollution" responses; 9-11 are "war" responses. They were special types of III-2's, designated separately so that they might be more easily counted.

Sample 14 is a marginal III-3; 15, a strong one; 16-19 are superior interpretive essays.

IV. There were few of these. The samples are barely adequate evaluations.

V. It is almost impossible to retell the poem without being interpretive in some way. A few people managed simple retellings, like "A man asks what hills, what spires are those? And he says this is the land of lost content." But that is about as sophisticated as V responses got.

VI. Sample 1 is a VI-6; 2 and 3 are VI-7's; 4 is a VI-7 too, but it could conceivably be an open-ended interpretation of the poem; 5 is a VI-8.

VII. There were not many of these, but this sample is typical of the few there were.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "INTO MY HEART"

### 17-Year-Olds

CATEGORY I

1. I like this poem. It stirs the memories in your mind. The poem is put together very nicely. The rhythem of the poem is very nice. I like the way he phases what he has to say. He is talking about a place where he has been and can never go again. Maybe, back in his childhood or something of that kind. He is expressing his feelings about it.

2. This is a well written poem and in it one gets a mystic feeling, because he can't come again. One gets the picture he is trying to get across, and feels that he, himself, is there. One has the feeling he has been there and feels and emptiness inside, a lonely feeling.

3. I'm a lover, I suspose you would say, of good poetry. At least what I might think is good poetry. I am at the present involved with poetry in English. I'm not trying to be a great literary critic, yet I can't say I enjoyed the poem opposite this page. It sounded to me very sticky and some how sloppy to me. Maybe it is simply my prejudice concerning certain forms of poetry that allows me to make the preceding statements. I like poetry that is simple yet very beautifully put together and rhymed. I prefer the AABB rhyme to AAAA, and enjoy a relatively simple beat. Like I said before, I am not a critic, yet I really didn't enjoy this.

4. Once on the great plains, the wild buffalo roamed in numbers of millions. Then the white hunter came along and slaughtered the meat to waste. The Indian felted very depressed about this and started fighting the white man. Indians said the white just comes and ruins our happy hunting grounds. Some day the great plains will have nothing no food for our people. So let us fight now for our belongings. The Indians took up arms against the white hunter. Then both buffalo and Indian slowly started to decrease in years that passed.

5. This poem discusses the thoughts of growing old. The memories, dreams, and contentment of a young man can only be envrid as one reaches the end of his highway of life. That vast plain of life with the spires of challenge and the rough road through the hills of growing up are envrid as they are almost gone.

   It is interesting to look at a poem like this one when we are only beginning life for it shows us that we must get as much out of life as we can in each age level of life. But I cannot agree that old age is just a time to look back and envy, but it is a time to make due with the time you have left. One that can only look back, will never go on.

CATEGORY II

1. The rhyme used in the poem is good and the author gives you an internal feeling in the poem. He uses dynamic words to get across the theme of the poem. To me the author is describing a past place in his life where he once had a wonderful time but for a certain reason he can never return again.

2. This poem, by A.E. Housman, is a perfect example of well constructed poetry. The poem cosists of two rhymed quatrain. In the first quatrain the rhyme scheme is as follows: ABAB, in the second it is CDCD.

   Rhyme is not employed in a poem just for sound, but in order to express some idea by the poet. With rhyme, a poet can link words that create a unique meaning vital to his poem.

   The meter of the poem is eambic tetrameter. This particular meter is often used by poets in communicating themes of live or grief. Meter is another rheteric device used by the poet in communicating his idea.

   Housman's poem, like all poetry, has two levels the literal and the symbolic. The literal level refers to what is said on the surface, or the meaning taken directly from reading it. The symbolic level level means the idea he is trying to communicate by the hidden meaning of the words, and rhetric devices combined.

   All this is a part of Housman's poem, and a part of all other poetry.

3. The poem is one where the author uses a metaphor of some place he knew in his past to stand for contentment and

security. He used to be happy and content but now he is not. He uses a place on earth as a symbol for this past contentment.

He realizes he can't return to this contentment because he has gone away from it. He is sadly looking back on this, and so he wrote the porm. He is feeling the memory and longing for this place as is evidenced by the use of the wind that blows into his heart. This is saying a feeling and desire for this place is coming back to him.

He realizes however that he cannot possibly return to this place in his past. The poem is a good one because it stands for all time, not just applying to a certain era of time. This is evidenced by the fact that it was written in 1890 but still has meaning today.

CATEGORY III

1. The poem is that air comes from different countries far away, comes into his heart and kills. It sounds to me as if he is talking about where he use to live and now the land is lost. He will never see it again.

2. They are saying, or what I think is the person lived in the country, and has lost his land, and will never be able to see it again. That when he sees the air, it kills him to look at it. He is saying to himself what hills, and farms are those, because he can still remember this when he once was there. He sees it shining plain, with no one there, therefore it stands, shining & plain, he remembers when he rode the highways down into the country & he thinks back once upon a time that he was there.

3. Futile ambition often drives a man to his ruin. In this poem A.E. Houseman is reflecting on his travels of the past. Houseman was considered a fatalist and he thought man's life was dwarfed by material werth and their ambition. Man should be satisfied with the natural gifts from God, and live close to nature. The farms and hills connect man working with God.

3a. This guy in the poem is supposedly in a strange land. He longs to go back home where he feels he would be much happier. It's the same old story - "I got dem ol' home-sick blues again, mama and I feel like dying..."

Then again, this poem could have a deeper theme. Perhaps the person longs to return to another previous time space in his own life. Perhaps he was some poor guy who made it rich and went to the big city etc., but now he longs to go back to where he "belongs."

4. This man speaks as if he was in exile he went away from home and returns many years later to it and it is strange, different, he is confused.

   He sees the new born discontent pain, the destroying of a human race, his people fight among themselves, war ravaging pain sorrow. Like he said "The happy highways where I went and cannot come again." Man has left each other out.

   All I have left to say is it reminds me of America.

5. I think is a very pretty poem, in fact I think the person who wrote it was a very intellengent person.

   Maybe someone died in his home town so he left the hill, maybe asking God why did it happen, God said that the way the ball bounce.

6. There is a man describing his past life. He likes his world that he used to live in because his home and environment were not filled with pollution and traffic, but a little home where the grass is green. You can here the birds and where you can see the blue sky. I believe that this man doesn't like our Progress or our Modern Times of easy life, where we have buses & cars that pollute the city.

7. This reminds me of pollution mainly because the first line says an air that kills. That is what our air seems to be heading towards. Also I think of pollution when it says the land of lost content once human beings were happy here and they respected the earth but because of disrespect we now have a dirty, polluted earth. And when the poem says "What are those blue remembered hills?" it seems almost like we've ruined our land so much that even things like beautiful hills or farms seem strange to us. The last line "and cannot come again" is sort of like we can't have another chance in our environment we already blew the chance we had. The whole poem is depressing just like pollution.

8. It's about something everyone knows about today, pollution. Not just the air we breath, but the water. A.E. Housman is very forunate, because he can remember not haveing pollution. Most young kids can't! They remember dirty water, factories, air you can't even see through. Farms have trouble with the pollution of the water. How can they grow health food if the water and air is polluted?! He also says he thinks that from now on this is the way its gonna be. I don't think so.

9. In this poem I think the poet is writing about a man who has gone off to war and knows that he'll never live to see his native land. The land on which he is fighting has lost hope and he dreams about the hope in the country and he tells that he'll never be the same again because of the land he's in now. When a person is close to death he remembers his childhood and his life and now he's recalling his native land.

10. This poem is kind of unclear to me but it sort of leaves an erie feeling in you. Housman seems to be writing about a country after war and how everything was changed in battles including the scenery such as the blue hills and the farms. The land of lost content to me means that this country lost whatever it was fighting for. Housman seems to be describing a place just from memory. I can't get much more out of this.

11. The poem to me is about a war. People are always fighting and someone is always getting killed. The wind is a symbol of how no one is satisfied without fighting. The author remembers the hills as being blue and not covered with blood & dead bodies. The farms were changed because of a war that was fought on them. The land of lost content is the land on which the war was fought. No one is really happy fighting. He, the author sees that there will never be eternal peace. He can not believe another war.

12. I think they are describing cancer of the lungs that come from cigarettes. Cigarettes are grown on farms. These farms are considered the lost area of content. He says he can no longer enjoy doing the things he once did with this condition of cancer.

13. From the poem I get the feeling that all beautiful things that you experience don't affect you the same way throughout your life time. Changes can always occur. Perfect security is impossible. I can understant his.

14. Someone looking back at their life. Remembering how it used to be. The clean air; the farms; the country; the calm way of life.

    This person seems to have done something wrong. Perhaps he is in jail. He long wishes it could all have been changed.

    Maybe in this life we all wish we could relive our bad experiences for perhaps a chance to change them for better.

People today don't seem to live for today they just live for their memories & wish they could be changed.

15. Housman describes his happy moments in the past and the fact that they are gone and cannot be lived again. He describes his memories as a scene of a countryside viewed from a distance with a road which leads from it but not to it. In other words it is as if a man's life were a journey on a road and after walking a while he pauses to look back. There he sees a pleasant, happy scene which is the happy past, but he realize that he cannot turn around and go back for it is too late.

16. I think this poem is about his past. Just the things he says in his writing seem to suggest this to me. The blue remembered hills, these could be some of his trouble spot he had in life... they were hard to get over the climb. The land of lost content this makes me think of a place you can never return to like you past; only in your memories. The highways most likely would be his decision that are done and finished, he can't ever change them or travel them again. In the first stanza, he writes about the feeling in his heart, when you think back about things you catch this idea of an air inside of you.

17. The author is stating a feeling of discontent, and unhappiness. Time has flown, and upon looking back, the poet is sad.

That which is recalled is the happy past; one never to be ventured into again. It is describing a mood we all entertain in the heart, but perhaps not in the mind.

Youthfulness is awarded content, upon retrospect. Yet, I wonder how the author felt at that time. Memory emphasizes that which we want to think.

This poem is a bit romantized. It attributes to youth a content. However every stage in life has its problems, cares and woes.

The words help create an atmosphere, that of sadness. Blue, shining blows all emphasize this point.

18. A. E. Housman was writing about a place where he used to be and it was a place of lost (lost happiness) content, and he can never be there again. He was trying to remember the blue hills, and farms, and he remembers it really well ("I see it shining plain"). But he can never go backwards, I think he wants to go back again, but feels kind of sorrowful that he can't. It probably isn't just the farms, and hills, but he probably remember all the good

or bad times he had, and he probably thinks he'll never have them again. It reminds me of the poem "The road not taken" - because neither can go back.

19. In this poem Housman makes plain the pain that can come from shattered dreams and loss of what made a person contented. A person who has not felt joy or contentment is not happy, but he doesn't know exactly what he is missing. One who has experienced that feeling of contentment and loses it loses everything. It is not the lack of joy which causes the pain, it is the remembrance of things which are no longer possible to have. The poet calls this memory of blue hills and farms a cold wind that kills. In a way memory is a cold wind that kills the spirit of a man who has lost.

## CATEGORY IV

1. This is not a very "deep" poem. I suppose the author is just describing a land he once was familiar with and is reminging the things that took place there though there things can never happen again. I like his use of rhyme in the poem and his use of descriptive words but to be honest about it, that's about all it has going for it.

2. I don't like the way its written that is the way everything rhymes so perfectly - hills-kills; blows-those; content-went; plain-again. It sort of seems fake & plaster. It is nice though and I can't really knock it. By its definite rhythm and everything it is impossible to read it straight, I keep on saying it in spurts, like saying a limerick, than a poem. It sounds like something Bullwinkle the Moose reads on his show or the Rocky show. It doesn't seem strange that I never heard of A.E. Housman (1890) because the poem is so cheaply wrote. He probably published a volume of his works that all sound the same.

## CATEGORY VI

1. Apathy runs deep, with a soulful bounding leap He began to make his midnight creep.

   Franky Lee & Judas Priest they were the best of friends until Franky Lee needed money one day Judas quickly pulled out a roll of tens, she placed them on a foot stool above the clouded plain saying take your pick Franky boy my loss will be your gain.

   Bob Dylan

2. You say that you are more interested in what we have to say, than how we say. Is this always true, or is it ever true this time. I don't know whether I can belief you or not. Or ever trust you or not!

3. It seems to be talking about someone whose life is soon to end. He or she is looking back on life at the beautiful things they've seen.

   P.S. This country is suppose to be keeping tabs on one out of every eight people in the U.S. - I hope this test has nothing to do with it - I wouldn't appreciate being spied upon.

   Thank you.

4. America is a rich and beautiful country. It is a country full of many beautiful sites and sceneries. Many types of people live in this free country of ours and are proud to be called American citizens. They are the people who are law abiding citizens. But there are people who deliberately cause trouble. These are the people we must help. America is full of much hope for the future in those who take advantage of it. But for others it is hopeless. They cannot make a future on the many resources given to us. It is like looking down an endless highway where you see no help or comfort.

5. About, above, across, against, along, among, began, below, became, beside, besides, beening come, down, during, except, for, in, inside, into, insides out, outside.

CATEGORY VII

1. The author is looking back over a happy way of life that is soon to end. Someone or something from "you far country"...will cause the destruction of his way of life, that cannot be repaired.

   I don't particularly like poetry with such a definite rhyme scheme because I get the feeling that the author is more worried about that than thought.

## Results for Adults

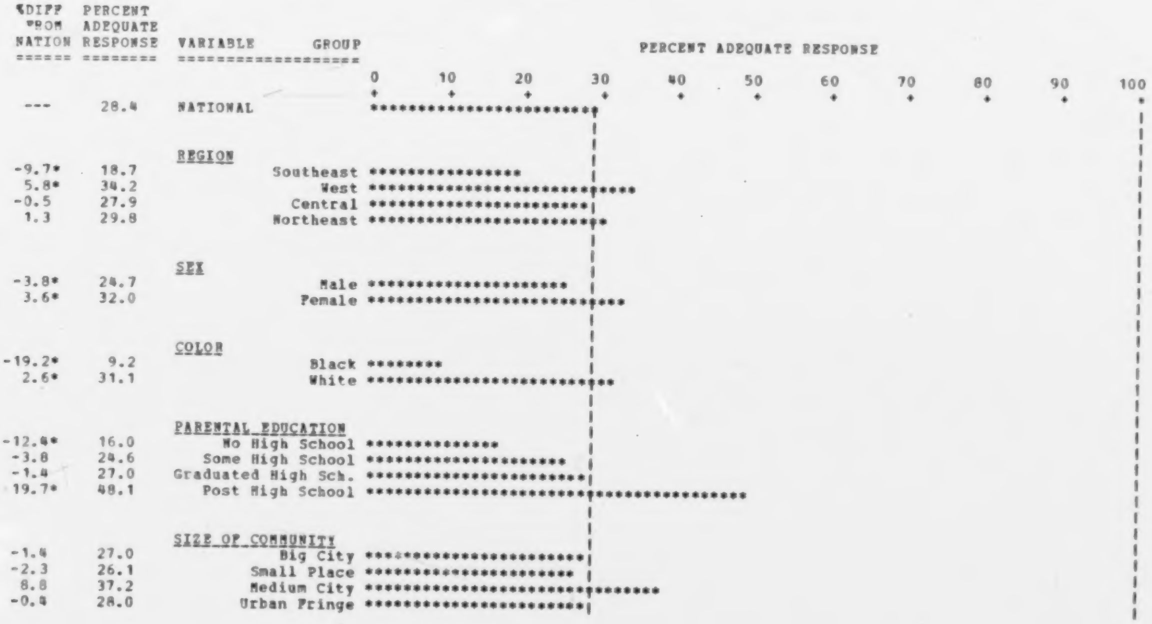
Nine percent of the adult essays were of the engagement-involvement variety, but only a fourth of them were strong enough to receive ratings of 3 or 4.

Fewer than 1% of the adult essays dealt with formal characteristics of the poem sufficiently for them to be categorized as perception responses. Eighty-one percent of the essays were interpretive. The percentage was even higher for the West (86%) and for the post-high-school parental education group (87%). Nationally, a third of the interpretive responses were rated adequate or superior, and again the West and the post-high-school group registered higher than national percentages: 32 and 45%, respectively.

Thirty-nine percent of the papers were categorized as III-2 essays--barely adequate interpretive responses. Pollution responses accounted for 10.6%, though the Northeastern contribution was a bit higher (15%). Compositions in which the writer indicated that the poem was about war amounted to 3.3% of the total number of papers (5.3% in the Central states).

Only 1% of the essays were evaluative, 2.5% were retellings, and 1.6% were unusual enough to fall into Category VI.

Exhibit 21. Percentages of Adequate Essays
(Rating 3 or 4)



| %DIFF FROM NATION | PERCENT ADEQUATE RESPONSE | VARIABLE | GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|
| --- | 28.4 | NATIONAL | |
| | | REGION | |
| -9.7* | 18.7 | | Southeast |
| 5.8* | 34.2 | | West |
| -0.5 | 27.9 | | Central |
| 1.3 | 29.8 | | Northeast |
| | | SEX | |
| -3.8* | 24.7 | | Male |
| 3.6* | 32.0 | | Female |
| | | COLOR | |
| -19.2* | 9.2 | | Black |
| 2.6* | 31.1 | | White |
| | | PARENTAL EDUCATION | |
| -12.4* | 16.0 | | No High School |
| -3.8 | 24.6 | | Some High School |
| -1.4 | 27.0 | | Graduated High Sch. |
| 19.7* | 48.1 | | Post High School |
| | | SIZE OF COMMUNITY | |
| -1.4 | 27.0 | | Big City |
| -2.3 | 26.1 | | Small Place |
| 8.8 | 37.2 | | Medium City |
| -0.4 | 28.0 | | Urban Fringe |

In all, 28.4% of the adult papers received ratings of adequate or superior, as Exhibit 21 indicates. Results in four groups were higher than that, however. In the West, the figure was 34%, for females it was 32%, and for Whites it was 31%. In the post-high-school parental education group, 48% of the essays were rated adequate or better--a figure 20 points higher than the national percentage. Lower than national percentages occurred for the Southeastern regional group (19%), for males (25%), Blacks (9%) and the no-high-school parental education group (16%).

Following are some sample responses, preceded by appropriate scoring observations.

CATEGORY I. Samples 1-4 are barely adequate responses; 5 begins with an interpretive assumption that the poem is about ecology, but then it becomes a predominantly subjective response, so it was scored I-3. Sample 6 has elements of other categories in it (especially III), but its thrust is "engagement-involvement" ("it reminds me," "it is very nice," etc.). Samples 7-10 are excellent examples of the best Category I responses.

II. There were not very many Category IIs, probably because adults no longer study poetry formally, if they study or read it at all. Sample 1 is a clear example of this type of response. Numbers 2 and 3 are less clear; nonetheless, they both deal with the tone of the poem and are directed mainly toward answering the question "What is the nature of this work?" Essay 2 was scored II-3, 3 was scored II-4.

III. Samples 1-3 illustrate some III-2 responses--that is, wrong, vague, undeveloped and unsupported interpretive efforts. Essays 4-10 are various III-3 interpretations, some minimal, some verging on III-4s. Samples 11-16 are excellent III-4s. Essays 17-20 are "pollution" responses, and 21 is a "war" response.

IV. There were very few evaluative responses to the poem--far fewer than there were at age 17. Neither of the two samples provided here is very good, for neither establishes clear criteria by which to evaluate the poem.

V. Though it is difficult to retell or paraphrase a poem without being interpretive in some way, a few respondents did make some adequate paraphrases, as the three samples here illustrate.

VI. As was the case with Category IV, there were also fewer Category VIs than at age 17. Included here are two samples of aberrant responses.

VII. There were also few of these; but this sample, divided as it is between Categories I and IV, illustrates well why there has to be a category for responses which will not easily go into any dominant category.

## SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSES TO "INTO MY HEART"

### Adults

CATEGORY I

1. The poem is very good for those people who like poetry for the romane reasons. I am a person when it comes to love, I tell someone or they know in the way I act around them.

2. This is sad to me; a man speaking of maybe home where he can no longer visit. He remembers and it is painful because it is lost to him. I don't like it.

3. The poem is like my childhood happy care free wonderful. But we can never go back, because we are grown up and have responsibility.

4. This is what we might be saying about this country 10-20 years from now.

5. America's ecology is in danger. The air we breathe is being polluted by factory smoke and fumes from car exhausts. We are no longer able to drive and view the wondorous mountain tops because of the smog created by man's scientific inventions.

   The question is, "Should we have modern inventions at the price of human sacrifice?" I say No. Our young people are discontented because man has forgotten the first law, self-presevation. We should plan our advancement so that the survival of all men is number one.

   Not only that we should consider the natural resources given to us as fortunes that cannot be replaced. After all, man cannot replace or rebuild what nature has given us free of charge.

6. This is a very nice poem it reminds me of the problems of today. The war, the strikes and the crime all of the happy days of the United States and other countries are gone. This land needs peace, love and understanding so that each sister and brother can understand one another.

   The poem is sort of a message to the people if only you can understand what is going on in this big world and the last sentences reminds me of the days that will never come.

7. This poem reminds me of my childhood on a farm with the green hills in the vally across from the apple orchard. How fresh the air smelled and how long ago things didn't seem to be in such an uproar as they are now.

8. This poem reminds me of my childhood years. The years of school and growing up. I suppose it is because we don't realize how happy and how really content we are until we get older and I think every person when he grows older becomes much wiser. Our childhood years cannot come again. We have to live our lives only one time. That is why we should always be sure to live wisely.

9. The author speaks to me because of the many times I feel homesick - nature especially takes me back to my childhood. The life with family in small towns - hills - mountains of Switzerland - the church bells - I also know that if and when I do go back things will have changed - Things will be different from my memory - people gone too - I see also that the author could have spoken of different losses - like missed opportunities - dreams not come true.

10. This poem makes me think of all the time I could have put to better use especially in my school years. As I look back on my life, I can see where I should have taken more interest in community and school activities, and learned more about the history of the town, so I could understand more of why the people have so many pro's and con's on the advancement of education and business opportunities. I honestly wish that there were some way I could go back and do it over again but as the poem states those are happy highways where I once was and can never go again. I hope that I can inspire my children to make the best of all their years and I'm trying harder to take more interest in things today especially those which will help in education for my children.

CATEGORY II

1. This poem by A.E. Housman has a rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d. The 1st and 3rd lines of each stanza is tetrameter. The 2nd and last lines in each stanza is trimeter.

   He is lamenting his lost but remembered days in the country. "What are those blue remembered hills..." The "country blows...air that kills" into his heart.

   He is now in the land of "Lost Content" he feels an emptiness. Yet, when his journey started, it was a happy road. But the road he has traveled has no return (return to youth and beauty).

2. This poem concerns itself with the condition of an area when everything growing has been destroyed. This could have been through either wars past or a story of pollution causing destruction in the future. This is a poem full of feeling, but under the conditions of today most unlikely to ever come to pass. The feeling expressed by the author was based on the conditions of his time, but has as much meaning in today's world as his.

   The work tends to be strongly depressing in full meaning, however, could only be fully accepted by a strongly pessimestic person.

   The work was well done, but works done in this pessimestic manor tend to depress to the point of complete lost meaning in the world today.

3. The poem seems to be about rememberance of an old man of the place where he grew up and is destined never to see again. He has suffered in his later years and was not really happy since he left his old place. I also have the feeling that the rememberances of the man are romanticized to be much nicer than they probably actually were. The last two lines of the first stanza give the hazy picture that he has in his mind and then clear up for him suddenly in great splendor. I find that the rhythm somehow lends to the generally melancholy mood as well as the opening line which gives the feeling of being stabled and sets the tone for the remainder.

4. In his poem INTO MY HEART, Houseman poignantly laments his youth and the happier times he had when younger. The sadness which accompanies a forlorn old age is emphasized by his memory of places now unattainable. His message is focussed by the apparent accuracy of his recall when he states "I see it shining plain."

The irreversability of time is a theme of much writing, but the effect which accompanies that fact is fully appreciated by only those who regret it - an emotion more painful to the old whose time has run out.

His use of metaphors to indicate distance - far country, and blue remembered hills, the latter suggested by haze - and his suggestion of motion and travel as evidenced by "happy highways" exemplify the power of poetry to invoke emotions from few words.

CATEGORY III

1. From where he used to live and he doesn't live there any more. It is used to be and not times now. It is olden days or times. It tells of how pretty the country is. I think he got lost.

2. The poem seems to be talking about men that is in service, far away from home. Their homes and farms that are behind. They have rememberance of the contents and the Highways. Seemingly they cannot return home again.

3. Like he might be some place far off and he's thinking about the place he used to live - farm land. Maybe he's old now he might be sick - might not have long to live - and he know he ain't going to get back. If he was young, he could get back-someway but I think he's old and can't do it. (Respondent cannot write or spell well enough to do this, but has an irate intelligence and insight. I wrote what she said to me because I thought her impression of the poem would be of interest.)

4. As I see the poem it tells of a person who is possibly regretful and perhaps unhappy for a moment and he is thinking of the younger and more fruitful years of his life. He would like to attempt to re-live those years in his mind and perhaps even remember them more glamorous than they really were.

5. Speaks of an aged person looking back through his years and comparing then to now. What used to be open beautiful land now is covered with towns and farms. People he knew are gone and in their places, new faces. He was happy now he has the care of the day upon his shoulder. The air that kills is time.

6. To me this is a poem of an older person looking back on his childhood. He is remembering his life, possibly on a farm, the fresh air and the hills on which he once played. He can only remember it as a happy place where he once had traveled but could not return. It could never be again as it was in his memory as a child.

7. This is a tale of childhood memories of things past which in a child's eye or our memory is perhaps false fantasy. A place which we can only remember in our minds and hearts. A place of no return.

8. I have traveled over the years many things I have seen. I cannot go back there again but I can travel in my mind to the lost places.

9. The land he has returned to is completely changed. There are new homes, new farms and buildings on the hills he remembered. He was very happy here, and was happy when he left, but now he is unhappy. He is nostalgic for the past but realizes one cannot live there. You cannot relive your life.

10. The poem is about a man or women getting old and close to death looking back on the life he or she had in the past with fond and also sad memories. I somehow feel that a man wrote this because of the way that things are remembered such as hills, farms, highways, and country. I feel he is sad about growing old and would like to go back and relive some of his past that he enjoyed. He does not seem to reject death because he feels that his usefulness to mankind is completed.

11. This is a poem written to communicate sadness for a time past in the author's life - childhood, young adulthood -- or whatever.

    In any case, the author recalls these times as (1) happy (happy highway, shining, content) and (2) irrevocably and sadly gone ("lost", cannot come again", "from yon far country").

    As a result, he is now wistful and sad - in fact, he describes the memory as an "air that kills."

    Most likely it is written by an elderly man who lives with only his memories -- although possibly it could have been written by a depressed, young adult wishing he had his childhood innocence (hills, farm, etc.) back and could escape the burdens of responsibile adulthood.

12. This poem is the author's expression of the longing in his heart for his homeland. He expresses the longing as an air that kills, because like air, it cannot be seen although it is felt - in this case felt with such emotional pain as to bring possible desire for death to stop the yearning.

His memory, like that of so many, recalls the hazy joys of his past which are now no longer available to him, while it fails to recall the pain, troubles or hardships. Perhaps he is still in the same geographical area, the area is of little importance. It is the joys of the past he wants to relive.

13. The main feeling conveyed by the poem is one of regret for something irretrievably lost. The poet's present state of mind is evidently one of discontent, contrasting with an earlier state of mind in which he was contented. He regrets the loss of his earlier contentment.

To convey these meanings, the poet makes use of extended metaphor. In the first stanza, vague memories from his happy past are compared to a killing air blowing from a far country. The visual image of "blue remembered hills" dotted with "spires" and "farms" is pastoral and uncluttered, hence evokes a feeling of peace or tranquility. The image also suggests something seen dimly, something familiar yet not completely recognizable for the poet is moved to ask what it is which he is seeing - the hills are blue, hence distant, since the spires and farms are not clearly visible (to the mind's eye) they must be distant too. This distance in space is symbolic of removal in time: The poet's dimly recalled contentment is far back in his past. Childhood, possibly a rural childhood, is thus suggested. In the second stanza, the poet's last state of mind is compared metaphorically to the land itself from which the killing air of regretful memory blows. He now sees this land "shining plain," hence more clearly as memory sharpens and continues, hence with more intense regret as this clearly seen shining land contrasts with his present life. It is a land of "happy highways", happy ways of life which he cannot again travel, hence a land irretrievably lost. Perhaps the land was childhood, through which we can pass only once. Or perhaps the poet is merely saying that he does not believe that he will ever again be content. In either case, it seems clear from this lyrical cry that it has been a long time since the poet was content.

14. The poem conveys the feeling that might be fealt by an old man reminiscing, an exiled person, or a person who has lost his freedom. There is a feeling of never returning to a situation that existed in the past, which must've provided some type of joy or fulfillment, which the person in the poem does not expect to occur in the present or future. It could also be the feelings of a person who is living through changing times, and who seeks the happier times before the unrest. It could be applied to the present time in this country.

15. Housman likens the memory of the land he once knew (the happy days of the past) to a killing or poisonous wind. This land of memory is called "far" and "lost", and he cannot return. He speaks of the blueness of the hills, and the shining quality of it in his looking back and calls it happy.

It would have been better for him had he not remembered, for the beauty and wonder of it and the fact that it is irretrievably lost to him, combine to make it a poignant memory indeed. But poignant is bitter-sweet, and there is the sweet element, too, and the possibility of finding a place like it in the future. This hope soothes the heart that knows it cannot go home again.

Is there not in all men the yearning for lost paradise and the striving to find it? He has at least that beautiful memory, showing that perhaps he has some contentment left, if only a little.

16. Houseman here muses on the passage of time - likening his temporal separation from prior events and emotions to the physical distance between a traveler and a well-loved place. The past has been transformed by memory - what in experience was pleasant, now in remembrance is painful "an air that kills". This statement of the past's pleasantness, however, is countered by the indistinctness of the memories - "blue remembered" plus no detail re "spires" and "farms". As a whole, these stanzas evoke a sense of the mixture of pain and pleasure memory affords.

17. The poem tells about a land that is being ruined of its beauty with new roads and programs. A land that once had color now is blank with no color and will not return.

18. This would be "right in" with our modern day ecology movement. From the opening line "Into my heart an air that Kills" could be related to the industrial wastes. In reference to the third line "blue remembered hills" showing our constant development of homes and new communities. Cities replacing the rural setting. No longer can one take a pleasureful, quiet, scenic highway journey.

19. This is about the land, and the ways it has change, in the past years. How the air, the stream, rivers are polluted, the country sides, are not as beautiful, they're full of trash, billboards, and everything else.

20. I am not dead but fighting with pollution everyday. I know that the public must co-operate in an all out effort to combat this pestilence.

    It is sad when the public feels secure in leaving the situation as is, in favor of fast living and short breath.

    I remember when the skies were azure and the air was pleasantly fragrant - tainted only now and then by burning garbage, dead animals or foul language.

21. World War. That's All.

CATEGORY IV

1. I think it is a very good poem because it tell about the land.

2. As a poem, I could care less about it. As for the topic, I am getting tired of hearing so much talk about how we are destroying our land and nobody seems to do anything.

   I really have no interest in poems.

CATEGORY V

1. I remember the past years of happy, content days spent in the hills. I wish I could return to it, but know I cannot.

2. In my heart I remember my past. The place I lived and the things that surrounded me. One can't go back and recapture his past.

CATEGORY VI

1. This is the land of God into my heart of Love.
2. There once was an old Lady, She was kind as she could be, She lived in an old house near a big Tree.
3. In Kentucky the summer is very nice there.

CATEGORY VII

1. This poem is written very good and is a very beautiful poem and a happy poem. The author tells a beautiful story which makes you feel good when you read it.

## Age Comparisons

As with the previous exercise, the distribution of essays in the categories was very much the same at both ages. However, three times as many adults responded personally to the poem (Category I) than did 17-year-olds. These engagement-involvement reactions generally reflected a sympathetic identification with the speaker of the poem and the general tone of nostalgia. Since it seems reasonable that identification of this sort is dependent upon age, it is not surprising that more adults approached the poem from this perspective.

A larger proportion of adults than 17-year-olds wrote adequate or superior responses to the poem. Literature assessment results reported elsewhere indicate that adults are exposed to less poetry than 17-year-olds and do not perform as well as teenagers on exercises requiring specific skills in criticism. However, the results of this exercise indicate that they are superior to the 17-year-olds when it comes to expressing their reaction to this particular poem. The explanation for this apparent contradiction lies in the essays themselves. The adults, in general, responded more frankly and openly to the poem, bringing to bear their broader experience and their deeper understanding of the poem's speaker.

## APPENDIX

The following appendix presents the complete results for all of the exercises in this theme. For every result there is a national percentage (the first figure after the word "effect"), and the standard error for that percentage ("S.E.P."). The national percentage is followed by the effects, or differences from the national figure, for each group, along with the standard error for each effect ("S.E. Effect"). To clarify this, turn to the very first results, those for Exercise R201. The first result presented is the percentage of 9-year-olds who made no response to the exercise. Nationally, 1.2% did not respond (with a standard error of .2). The effect for the Southeast is 1.1%, so one can conclude that 2.3% of the 9-year-olds in the Southeast (1.2 plus 1.1) did not respond to the exercise. The figure for the Western region was .3% higher than the national percentage; the Central figure was .3% below the national level and the Northeastern no response rate was .8% below, as their effects of -.3 and -.8 indicate.

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